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HISTORY
of the
CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

by the
REV^d HENRY STEBBING, M. A. &c.

Vol. II



*And raising his hands towards heaven he exclaimed,
I shew me here unto Thee, My Eternal, living God! —*

— Luke i. 10.

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ANALYTICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL,

TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

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HISTORY

OF

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

CHAP. XII.

STATE OF THE CHURCH AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY. — RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE PAPAL POWER.

By the beginning of the eighth century, the knowledge of Christianity was commensurate with civilisation. It had given birth to new laws and to new systems of policy ; it had almost wholly changed the aspect of the intellectual world ; had brought objects, before invisible to the eye of reason, into the sphere of general comprehension, and thereby led men's minds to attempt discoveries in regions which had hitherto been regarded but as the realm of shadows. Neither, however, was the impulse which society thus received sufficient of itself to overcome the force of adverse circumstances ; nor was it in the councils of Divine Providence to stop the current of events, or so modify them as to remove the necessity of a moral and individual resistance on the part of mankind. When this resistance, therefore, was no longer opposed, and the graces of the Gospel ceased to be cultivated, the signs of conversion, which had at first appeared on the surface of society, became gradually less distinct, and at length vanished in the darkness of increasing sensuality and ignorance. But the name and the forms of profession were still preserved. The cor-

ruptions of the world seemed to render the veil which they flung over its vices more than ever necessary, and it was retained with the sagacious pertinacity of conscious evil. In tracing the history of the church, therefore, from this period, the view becomes every age more extensive, and the difficulty of showing the actual progress of Christianity increases in proportion to this extension of the outward profession. But it had become an instrument in the hands of the ambitious. There was, also, a numerous and active class of men, who, without possessing spirituality, yet saw, with sufficient clearness, the worth of Christianity, to take an active interest in upholding its doctrines. In both these classes, the earnestness with which they pursued their respective objects formed a ground of fellowship between them and the true disciples of the Gospel. The mass was thus bound together, and the forms of communion which had been introduced, the discipline which had begun to grasp the most heterogeneous of its elements, gave it shape and measurement; and, vast as was now the number of professors of which it consisted, brought them within the reach of order and government.

In the struggle which took place to obtain the pre-eminence in the control of this new community, thus almost resolved into the world by its extent, but again separated from it by peculiar laws, we find the origin of most of those troubles and abuses which deformed, for so many ages, the face of Christendom. The papal power was properly the concentration, the ingathering, of the powers which belonged to the different churches into which, from the days of the apostles, the great body of the faithful had been divided. In Italy, the concentrating process had been early begun. The importance of Rome, as an ecclesiastical station, was derived partly from its old political grandeur, and partly from the primitive extent and noble fidelity of its church. Some of those which were subsequently established in its neighbourhood almost naturally partook of

the character of colonies, and the rest could not fail to look to its example, and submit to its counsels, in all matters of great or general consequence. Thus, like the chief of a family, it enjoyed from the first an operative pre-eminence over the congregations of Italy ; and by the time other churches were established in the West it had acquired a strength and an authority which enabled it to assume continually, additions to that power, the beginnings of which had been thus freely granted. To these sources of influence was added another, into which the advocates of its supremacy were soon content to resolve all the rest. It having been established, first, that St. Peter was the greatest of the apostles, and then that he was the first bishop of Rome, an easy mode was discovered of deducing therefrom a line of arguments which had far less fallacy in their connection than in the principle on which they were supposed to be established. The fact even of St. Peter's having been at Rome has been declared disputable by many long and sharp controversies. But a circumstance is not to be treated as doubtful because it is applied to establish a questionable doctrine ; nor, if doubtful, can be made more so by any misapplication to the purposes of a theory. General tradition is the strong support of the belief that the apostle not only visited the Roman capital, but that, having for some time laboured there with St. Paul, he shared with him the glory of consecrating the scene of their exertions with his blood. That the narrative of his journey has the air of a legend, militates but little against the truth of the fact itself. Many of the best accredited events in ecclesiastical annals are found blended with the fables of superstition, and require to be carefully sifted before their place is assigned them in history. In the present case, the absurd stories to which ignorance has given birth are easily separated from the main incident ; and there seems, therefore, on the whole, to be no reason sufficiently strong for rejecting the current opinion. The assertion of the apostle's

priority of rank and power involves questions of a very different character. Christ never ceased to insist among his followers on the necessity of humility, as one of the primary virtues of evangelical holiness, and as especially requisite to the teachers of his religion. It is plain, therefore, that he would make no appointment which could in any way tend to introduce the proud spirit of domination into his church; and that the words with which he addressed Peter are not to be interpreted in any sense which might put them in opposition to this principle. But in divine things, that must not be sought by implication which Revelation did not at the first establish; and neither an apparent expediency, nor any change of circumstances, can ever legitimatise the inventions of men as parts of a system given by God. Unless, therefore, it could be made to appear that Christ intended to place his people under the sway of an apostolic potentate, St. Peter himself would have no rank above his fellow-labourers in the heavenly calling; and if he, from whom it is pretended the right to dominion was derived, had in reality no such pre-eminence, much less can they have it who are denominated his successors.* In this respect, therefore, the claims of the bishops of Rome were based on a very uncertain foundation; and how little use was made of their supposed privileges in that period of the church, when any such distinction, if rightly founded, must have been most generally known, is proved by the fact, that the greatest uncertainty prevails as to the succession of the first Roman prelates. Of the several catalogues

* Considerable difficulty is found by the supporters of St. Peter's primacy at Rome, in removing the claims made for St. Paul to the same pre-eminence. Eusebius, after Irenæus, gives him the first place; but Valesius, his learned editor, remarks on this circumstance, first, that the most honourable persons are often named last, and that in the seals of the Roman church Paul is placed on the right, Peter on the left hand; secondly, that Eusebius never enumerates the apostles in the number of bishops, and that, therefore, though he mention both as founders of the church of Rome, he is not to be considered as naming them both as bishops. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 21*. Basnage answers these observations at some length, and contends that the place given to St. Paul was really indicative of pre-eminence: that if Eusebius do not rank the apostles as bishops, the remark applies to St. Peter as well as St. Paul; and that, consequently, he could not properly be regarded as the founder of its prelacy. *Hist. de l'Eglise, liv. vii. c. 3*.

which have come down to us, not one agrees with the other in stating through what individuals the great head of the church chose to communicate his infallible monitions and administer his irresistible decrees. It is scarcely to be believed that this would have been the case, had the bishop of Rome possessed any species of spiritual sovereignty over the faithful, or had he been acknowledged as the possessor of exclusive endowments; but no superiority seems to have been claimed for either the diocese or the prelate till several ages after the death of St. Peter.

Fabian, who lived in the third century, was the first Roman bishop who instituted the division of parishes. By that time, it is probable, the diocese had acquired importance in the West, as well on account of its extent as its antiquity; but it is plain, from many circumstances, that no especial superiority was attributed to its rulers over those of other portions of the general church. In matters of discipline the bishop deemed it necessary to take the advice of the neighbouring prelates and clergy. His decision was not regarded as in any respect conclusive on points of controversy; and at the council of Nice the primate of Alexandria was endowed with the same kind of authority over the Egyptian provinces as that which the pontiff exercised over those of Italy. It matters little what was the extent of the districts placed under their control. The power given to the bishop of Alexandria was given him because there was the example of the Roman primate for such an exercise of ecclesiastical authority: but evident it is, that if the rights of the latter had been regarded as derived from a divine and peculiar appointment, no comparison could have been made between the situations of the two prelates; and the church of Alexandria, whatever was its rank in relation to others, would not have been mentioned at the same time with that of Rome.

The emperor Constantine divided the state into four prætorian prefectures, each of which was again divided into provinces. Those of Italy were placed under the

jurisdiction of two officers, termed vicars ; one of which had the government of the city and the surrounding territory, distinguished by the title of the suburban provinces. Great doubt exists as to the extent of this division ; but the bishop of Rome appears to have early possessed the undisputed ecclesiastical rule over the provinces of which it consisted. While, however, he thus acquired an extensive and defined dominion, another sacred potentate, the bishop of Milan, became possessed of the provinces of Italy, extending from the mouth of the Po to the frontiers of Cisalpine Gaul. His authority, if not superior to that of the Roman prelate, was, at least, equal to it, and wholly independent of its influence. The churches of Aquilea and Ravenna grew later into note : but their bishops speedily rivalled those of Rome and Milan, both in power and dignity ; and Italy, so far from bowing to the sway of a single ecclesiastical ruler, furnished space for the increasing ambition of four nearly equal candidates to carry on the pursuit of dominion.*

In the contentions to which the rise of Arianism, and other heresies, gave birth, the Roman bishops were brought into collision with the emperors, and displayed in their conduct a firmness and steady devotion to the cause they undertook to defend, which became them both as men and as Christians. But instances are on record of their exercising an intemperate severity towards those who came within their power, which afforded a too sure prognostic of their future encroachments. The historian Socrates, who wrote in the early part of the fifth century, speaks with reprobation of the conduct of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria ; and says, that they had both overstepped the proper bounds of ecclesiastical authority, which was thereby degenerating into tyranny.†

* Mosheim gives the rank of patriarch to the Roman pontiff, and states that the bishops of Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, answered to the four prætorian prefects under whom Constantine placed the different quarters of the empire ; but no title of superiority is ascribed to him by either Sozomen or Theodoretus, where they mention him with the other bishops of Italy and Gaul. Sozomen, lib. iv. c. 11. Theodoretus, lib. ii. c. 15.

† Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. 11

Even long before this, that is, towards the close of the second century, pope Victor attempted to impose a yoke on the churches, which, though in appearance emanating from different councils, was chiefly of his own fabricating. The clergy of Ephesus saw fit to persevere in their original mode of celebrating Easter; and neither reason nor Scripture, nor the laws of the church, could be brought to oppose their determination. But the bishop of Rome fulminated his wrath against them, and published letters which it only wanted the power of a later day to make effectual for their destruction. So far, however, were the Christians of those times from justifying this usurpation of authority, that even his partisans in the controversy refused to justify his proceedings, and heard him proclaimed a tyrant without venturing to contradict the accusation.*

It is stated, that Sylvester, who ascended the pontifical chair in the year 314, was to have been the president of the council of Nice, but was prevented by extreme old age. Whatever truth there may be in this, it can prove no more than that the Roman prelates were now equal with the highest members of the church, and had sufficient influence to make themselves regarded as fitted to superintend its most important deliberations. There is every reason to believe that Constantine greatly enriched and strengthened them by his bounty; but their power was enlarged, about the same time, by far more honourable means. When Arianism, with all the dire attendants on heresy and persecution, was ravaging the East, Rome offered an asylum to the brightest ornaments of the age. It was there they were sure of making heard their appeals to justice, that defenders of their opinions were to be found, who feared neither the threatenings nor the reality of danger, and that the essential doctrines of the primitive faith were still protected against the invasions of a bold and novel theology. Julius, and even the weak Liberius, were true champions of the orthodox faith at this period. The coun-

* Fleury, l'Hist. liv. iv. c. 30.

cils which assembled in different places, and firmly resisted the progress of the new opinions, met at their summons ; and for awhile the influence of the church of Rome and Christian liberty seemed to rest on the same foundations. Unfortunately for the interests of piety, the hopes which might have been formed from this state of things proved fallacious. Successive schisms converted the energies which were required for the simple defence of truth into a nourishment for ambition : Novatian first set the example of not only defying the power of the pope, but of assuming it himself ; and ere the death of Liberius it was contended for by two claimants to its possession, who were determined to retain their hold of the prize, though it should perish in their grasp. Damasus owed his final triumph over the anti-pope Ursinus, not more to the justness of his cause, than to the interference of the emperor Gratian. But the defence of authority is hardly ever carried on without giving it a fresh and undue value in the eyes of those who possess it ; and among the many circumstances which stimulated ecclesiastical ambition may be fairly reckoned the rivalry with which every dignity was assailed, from the first hour that rank in the church was assimilated to rank in the world. Not less than 137 persons fell slaughtered in the church where the assembled partisans of Ursinus defied the power of the opposite party, and proclaimed him pope. The manners of the hierarchy fully corresponded with the pride and violence thus displayed. Before the termination of the fourth century, luxury had become a general vice among the higher orders of the clergy : but at Rome it was systematised into the pomp of a court ; and the modern defenders of papal authority have chosen to draw, from this manifest proof of corruption, an argument to establish the antiquity of its loftiest pretensions.*

* Baronius, *Annal. Eccles.* an. 367. The reader will not be uninterested in seeing how differently the ancient historian Ammianus Marcellinus, and Baronius, the learned but bigoted modern annalist, represent the corruptions of these times. After describing the contest between the rival popes, Ammianus remarks, "Nor do I deny, considering the temptation placed before them, that they who are anxious for the prize ought to seek it

Innocent I., who occupied the pontifical seat at the beginning of the fifth century, took an important part in the affairs of his age; and, by the services which he rendered the people as well as the church, enlarged and strengthened the foundations of his power. He beheld the last remains of Roman glory trampled under foot by the soldiers of Alaric the Goth; the very shadow of empire departing from her walls, and his own authority left remaining as the sole defence of virtue and piety. The position in which he thus stood was one which would have roused the feelings of a much less energetic and far less devoted man than Innocent. But his talents, his zeal and charity, were equal to the necessities of the times; and while the Roman populace looked up to him as their only protector against the barbarians, the eyes of all Christendom contemplated with admiration his noble opposition to the increasing spirit of schism and heresy. Hence his counsel was sought, and his opinions received, with the profoundest respect: he was constituted arbiter in almost every controversy agitated by the other rulers of the church, and his decisions were given in the full confidence that they would be received without dispute. Innocent did not fail to take advantage of the influence he enjoyed. In his letters, in his conferences, in whatever he did or

with all their might; since having obtained it, they are sure of being enriched with the offerings of the women, of riding splendidly habited in chariots, and of enjoying feasts which surpass in profusion the banquets of kings. But far happier would it have been for them if, despising the greatness of the city, by which they attempt to excuse their vices, they had followed the example of those provincial ecclesiastics who, by their spare and simple diet, the meanness of their garments, and the humility of their bearing, commend themselves to the perpetual favour of the Deity, and the veneration of his true worshippers." *Lib. xxvii. c. 3.*

On these reflections Baronius observes, that the true foundation of this and similar slanders was the envy which had been excited in the minds of the heathen by the growing wealth and prosperity of the Christian church; to which he adds the jest which St. Jerome states was made by a Roman magistrate to Damasus: "Make me," said he, "bishop of Rome, and I will become a Christian." But the strength of his answer consists in this, that there is the strongest reason for believing that most of the distinguished churchmen of these times were remarkable for their personal mortifications; and that if their tables were splendidly furnished, they were as much so for hospitality as for pomp or dignity. *Annales Eccles. an. 367.*

It was Damasus who first introduced the custom of singing the psalms by alternate verses, and closing each with the gloria. *Platina. Le Vite de Pontefici, Venet. 1715. p. 72.*

said, the supreme authority of the Roman see was alluded to and asserted. He openly declared that the discipline of that church ought to be the universal rule of Christendom ; that it had a divine right to be consulted before any other ; and that as the church of Antioch was at the beginning the noblest of all churches, because it was St. Peter's first bishopric, so Rome became greater than Antioch, inasmuch as the consummation of the apostle's power was of higher worth than the commencement.*

But this direct assumption of authority by the chief of the Roman see could not at once quench the spirit of independence which was still, for some centuries, to animate the churches not immediately under its influence. It was more to the personal worth of the pontiff, or the force of his intellect, than to any acknowledged principle of supremacy, that the tribute of obedience was paid. By a system of profound policy, this voluntary offering to individual merit was converted into a tax, and the genius of a few exalted churchmen into the splendid abstraction of one man's infallibility. Had many such bishops as Zosimus, the successor of Innocent, occupied the papal see, the world would never have heard of its claims to domination, or have listened to them if preferred. But the impression which the latter eminent man had made on the church at large was not effaced, when Leo the Great appeared, and began with superior strength to lay the foundations of ecclesiastical monarchy. Trying the force of his powerful mind against the ambition and cupidity of barbarian hosts, he successively saved Rome from the arms of Attila and Genseric. In the controversies which so fearfully agitated the East, his approval was deemed necessary to give validity to the decisions of councils composed of the wisest and most dignified members of the church. The emperor ventured on no measure which might excite his suspicion ;

* Du Pin observes of the letters of Innocent, "He writes indifferently well, and gives an air to his notions and reasonings which recommends them ; but they have not always that solidity and exactness which might be looked for." *Bibliot. Pat. cent. v.*

and the proud patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria employed both policy and entreaty to procure his protection. The additions which he made to the permanent means of power were many and important. Under him the dignity of the church of Rome was for the first time represented by a stationary ambassador at the imperial court; and Justinian decreed that, confirmed as it was by the authority of councils, and founded on the faith of St. Peter, nothing should ever interfere with its right to supreme authority. The Eutychians, the Manichees, and every species of heretics or sectaries, quailed at the threats of a potentate thus armed at all points with the weapons of spiritual warfare, and so ready to add to them the sword and the sceptre of the monarch. Leo, therefore, won and merited the high-sounding appellation of the champion of the church, and the greatest of the popes that had governed its affairs since the days of St. Peter. But the very earnestness with which he reiterates in his epistles the claim of supremacy shows how unwilling the church at large was to admit it, except as circumstances gave additional weight to Roman influence, and the character of the pontiff consecrated it in the eyes of the world.

The eloquent and virtuous Hilary, bishop of Arles, and, united with him, nearly all the clergy of France, vigorously resisted the decisions of Leo, even in the height of his glory. Nor did the eastern patriarchs cease from their assertions of equality till the power of their nearer rivals threatened them with ruin. The ecclesiastical chiefs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople were more envious of each other than of the pontiff; and there was not one, perhaps, who would not willingly have sacrificed a great portion of his dignity to Rome to purchase a superiority over his nearer rival. But their submission bore all the marks of the compulsion produced by necessity. The homage they rendered was the immediate result of some pressing danger, or some new design on the liberty of conscience. As long

as they could resist with safety, resistance was made; and the contest between Felix II., who ascended the pontifical chair in 483, and Acacius, the patriarch of Constantinople, affords a striking proof of the state of the two parties at that period. The latter, who had rendered himself odious to Rome by his support of the emperor Zeno and the famous henoticon, might have well been expected to evince some alarm, when he found a council assembled at Rome, consisting of sixty-seven bishops, with the pope at their head, to examine his conduct. But instead of shrinking with terror at the sentence of excommunication fulminated against him, he boldly retorted on his judge, and asserted not merely his independence but his equality.* While the pope anathematised the patriarch, the patriarch struck the pope out of the diptychs, or calendar of bishops, saints, and martyrs. The presumption of the former, in sending messengers to Constantinople charged with his decisions, was met by the latter with equal promptitude; and the episcopal ambassadors were immediately on their arrival cast into prison. When the sentence of deposition was passed, the legate employed to make it known dared only execute the commission by means of the most cautious artifice; and instead of its producing any effect on the minds of the neighbouring prelates, it only served to re-unite for a time the otherwise discordant elements of the eastern church.

This dispute between the heads of the two great portions of Christendom was continued for some time after the haughty originators of the quarrel ceased to breathe. Gelasius, who succeeded Felix, and Euphemiûs, the new patriarch of Constantinople, contended, like men who could really determine the fate of departed souls, whether Acacius should be consigned by their decree to heaven or hell. The mingled arguments and persuasions of the eastern patriarch appear at this day to have possessed the strength which should have moderated the

* Pasnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, liv. vi. c. 3. Evagrius, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. c. 1—23.

anger of the stern pontiff; but they produced no other effect than that of fixing him in his determination, and keeping the whole Christian world in a state of anxious suspense. To the remark of Euphemius, that it had ever been the custom with the newly elected bishop of Rome to testify his communion with the church in the East, Gelasius replied, that he must have sinned against the truth had he done so in the present instance; that he dare not enter into fellowship with those who preferred heretics to the holy see; that Acacius, though not himself guilty of heresy, had favoured those who were, and that Euphemius himself was guilty of a similar offence.*

But the zeal and subtlety with which this firm asserter of Roman supremacy upheld his claims are still more clearly set forth in his letter to the emperor Anastasius. "There are two sorts of power," says he, "which exercise a sovereignty over all the world,—the sacred authority of the bishops, and the authority of kings. The charge of bishops is so much the greater, because they must give an account at the day of judgment of the actions of kings." He adds, "You know, sire, that although you are supreme, and your dignity excels all others, yet you are obliged to submit yourselves to the authority of those that minister about holy things; that you require of them the principles of your salvation, and ought to follow the rules which they prescribe for the receiving of the sacraments, and disposing of ecclesiastical affairs. For if the bishops, being persuaded that God hath given you a sovereign power over things temporal, yield obedience to your civil laws, without opposing your power in temporal matters, with now great reverence ought you to be subject in spiritual things to those who are set apart for the distribution of the holy sacraments? And if all the faithful ought to submit themselves in general to all the bishops, which discharge their office well, with how much greater reason ought they to yield to the bishop of the holy see,

* Fleury. Anastasius, Bibliot. de Vitis Rom. Fon. t. i. p. 82. Rom. 1718. Platina. Du Pin, Bibliot. Pat.

whom God hath made the first among the bishops and the church hath always acknowledged to be such ?

It was in these terms the Roman pontiffs could address the emperor of the East at the close of the fifth century. The reasoning pursued was the same as that on which the casuists of a later day supported the whole vast fabric of ecclesiastical dominion. Pretending to no authority in civil matters, they claimed a power which, vast and indefinite, must, if it acted at all, whether for good or ill, subject all civil governments to its sway. That it would have been for the benefit of mankind had the world acknowledged the pure principles of Christian truth and meekness for its laws, amounts to the force of an axiom ; and if those who had the charge of administering these sacred laws might be regarded as trustworthy stewards of so divine a charge, there can be little more doubt but that they, above all other men, might have been most safely trusted with the management of human affairs. But two very material circumstances are here to be taken into consideration : the heads of the church had become secularised both in manners and principle ; they had violated their right to Christian pre-eminence — had corrupted the fountain of their authority, and could, therefore, no longer claim, except theoretically, the power which knowledge, faith, and sanctification might have given them. In the next place, the authority and influence of the priesthood, which admit of being thus spiritually considered, are viewed under a light totally false, when reasoned of according to secular maxims. The chief magistrate of a country may be supposed to have concentrated in himself all the power which can be exercised through the inferior officers of the state. As the head, and as representing the majesty of the nation, he may be regarded as the fountain of honour ; but the strong tendency so early shown by the bishops of Rome to assume the power which such a concentration of authority may give, is only an evidence of their having wilfully forgotten the tenure by which they held their rank. It was not as the mystical head of the church

they ruled, but as the ministers of Christ, superior in station, but not, necessarily, because of their station, superior in spiritual endowments. Considered in the strongest light, they were but the supreme directors of the church; had no original power; no individual or peculiar order. When they spoke, therefore, as spiritual monarchs, they abused the dignity they enjoyed, and gave a view of church government authorised as little by reason as by Revelation.

The emperor, fully aware of the importance of preserving the independence of the eastern church and the dignity of the metropolitan, resisted with equal firmness both the influence and the persuasions of the pontiff. Euphemius was deposed for some suspicious intercourse with the Isaurians; and his successor would have willingly secured the tranquil enjoyment of his new dignity by compromising his equality with the bishop of Rome. But the sovereign forbade this violation of his rights; and the successor of Gelasius yielded a reluctant assent to the proposition of placing Acacius on the diptychs.*

The next passage in the history of the papacy presents us with a melancholy picture of the state of the times, and of the dependence of the popes themselves on the opinions of their clergy, and the disposition of the men in power. Symmachus, a Sardinian deacon, was elected on the death of Anastasius; but he had no sooner ascended the pontifical chair than another pope was set up by the party engaged to establish the hereticon in the West. It was then fiercely debated to whom the dignity belonged; and the respectability, as well as the pride, of the pontiff, was sacrificed to the necessity of his submitting to the arbitration of the Gothic sovereign of Ravenna. Scarcely had Symmachus been relieved from this difficulty, by the honourable decision of the monarch, when the defeated party, recovering their strength, boldly accused him of crimes which merited not deposition only, but the severest

* See Baron. 495. Theod. Hist. lib. ii. c. 26, 27. Socrates, lib. ii. c. 39, 40.

punishments of the law. This attempt also failed. The eighty bishops who assembled at Parma to try the head of the church, expressed, at the conclusion of the session, their regret at having ventured on such a proceeding ; and Symmachus went forth from the council with the additional veneration accorded to innocence, thus tried and thus established. But the mere circumstance of its being supposed lawful at any period, or under any considerations, to put the pontiff upon his trial before an assembly of the clergy, militates strongly against the notion of his peculiar and unqualified supremacy. The acquittal even which he had received at the hands of his brethren was disputed ; and such was the position in which he stood, that when the deacon Eunodius published a defence of the proceedings at Parma, he deemed it necessary to assemble another council to confirm the statements of his defender, and did not scruple to insert his writing among the apostolic decrees.*

- A. D.
514. Hormisdas, who succeeded this pontiff, rendered himself more conspicuous by his moderation and endeavours to restore peace to the two divisions of the church, than by pride or daring ; but he wanted not the feelings which now seemed systematically to inspire his order. Odoacer had endeavoured to establish a law, that the pope should not be elected without the consent of the king of Italy. The attempt of the Gothic monarch had been met by the decrees of a Roman council, which determined that no heed was to be given to the sacrilegious ordinance. But the jealousy, which thus displayed itself in the movements of the rival powers under Symmachus, was made not less apparent in the pontificate of the temperate Hormisdas. Theodoric was an Arian ; but desired to show respect for the pontiff and his church, by presenting on the altar of St. Peter two splendid silver chandeliers. The offering was refused ; and Hormisdas, out of his own revenue,

* Fleury, t. vii. l. 30. n. 54.

supplied the ornaments which might have been received as the customary tokens of royal devotion.

The history of his successor, John, affords still clearer evidence of the struggle carried on between the temporal and spiritual powers in this age, and of the uncertain foundation on which, as yet, the assumed authority of the pontiffs was placed. Anxious to save the Arians of the East from the sword of persecution, Theodoric required an advocate at the court of Constantinople, and, in the capacity of the monarch's representative, the pontiff consented to plead the cause of those against whom the thunders of the church had been so frequently levelled. Arrived on the shores of the Bosphorus, John was received with the reverence due to his sacred character; was allowed to dispute the right of pre-eminence with the patriarch; and saw an emperor prostrate before him, desiring to receive the crown which he had long worn from his hands. But the honour with which he was thus treated in the East, proved his destruction on returning to Italy. The suspicious Theodoric regarded the respect he had received from the emperor, as a sign that he was unfaithful to his own sovereign: and the unfortunuate pontiff had only reached Ravenna, when he was seized and thrown into a prison, where he languished a few months, and then died.* Unterrified at the result of his violence, Theodoric ventured to choose a new pope on his own authority; nor dared the senate of Rome oppose the measure. A most important right was thus exercised by the temporal monarch: and, though first assumed by a Goth and an Arian, it was viewed by subsequent princes as a rule of practice for themselves. Boniface II., who ascended the pontifical chair about three years after the innovation effected by Theodoric, conceived the bold design of obviating the danger to which it exposed the church, by passing a decree in council, that for the future the reigning pontiff should nominate

* Baronius, an 525, sec. 105. Fleury, t. vii. l. 31. n. 98. Platina. Basnage, Hist. vol ii. p 381.

his successor. Never was a stranger idea conceived in the mind of an ecclesiastical potentate ; or one which, by its realisation, would have so completely developed the fullest conception of papal greatness, and so thoroughly deprived the church of its graces and vitality. But the attempt did not succeed : a second council determined that the new law was contrary to the established canons ; and Boniface himself was obliged to burn the decree he had obtained, in the presence of his assembled clergy.* This was not the only act of deliberate authority in which Boniface was distinctly opposed by the church at large. A schism at the commencement of his pontificate produced the rival pope, Dioscurus ; but the death of the pretender, a few weeks after his election, had at once freed him from the struggle for which he was preparing. Instead, however, of quietly rejoicing in his escape, he exerted his authority to determine the fate of Dioscurus in the world of spirits ; and the humane and considerate of all parties heard, with secret horror, the head of the church pronounce a formal anathema on the departed soul of his rival. But, happily, sufficient confidence and knowledge of the Gospel still remained to prevent the decree from being regarded as final : and the first act of the succeeding pontiff was publicly to burn the disgraceful and horrible ordinance.

A.D.
534. The imperial army, under Belisarius, was now on the eve of subjecting Italy to the will of the empress Theodora and her ministers. At this period, that ambitious princess sent for Vigilius, a Roman deacon, then at Constantinople, and opening the treasures at her command, and pointing to the troops headed by their invincible general, offered to seat him on the pontifical throne, if he would promise to employ the power he should thereby obtain to set aside the council of Chalcedon. Vigilius readily accepted the dazzling offer ; hastened to Belisarius, then at Ravenna ; presented the gold, and

* Fleury, t. vii. l. 32. n. 22. It is curious to find how cautiously Platina has omitted any allusion to this circumstance.

the orders he had received from the empress ; and the day after Silverius, the reigning pontiff, resigned himself into the hands of the conqueror, he was elected to the vacant chair by a disgusted and trembling council. The career of Vigilius was answerable to its commencement. During the eighteen years which his pontificate lasted, he proved, according to his promise, a faithful supporter of the Eastern heretics ; preserving his dignity, against the suspicions of Justinian, by an outward show of orthodoxy, and against the return of Silverius, by reducing him, in his exile, to a degree of misery which speedily brought him to his end.

Vigilius died on his return from Constantinople, whither he had been called to settle the affairs of the three chapters, and was succeeded by Pelagius, who, for some time lay under the heavy suspicion of having contributed to his death. To remove this idea, and induce the community of the faithful to acknowledge him as their head, he made a solemn procession to St. Peter's ; and there, with the cross in his hands, and the Gospel under his head, swore, in the face of the congregation, that he had done no injury to Vigilius. But however the people at large might be moved by the suspicion of his guilt, or the mode he employed to declare his innocence, the great body of the clergy hated him for the part he had taken in the condemnation of the three chapters. To remove accusations of this nature was a more difficult task, and Pelagius appears to have enjoyed little of that profound reverence which he probably expected to acquire by his elevation.

The death of this pontiff took place in the year 559, when the approach of the Lombards, their successes, and cruelties, so shock whatever was established, whether on law or custom, on divine rights or human institutions, that no argument can be fairly drawn respecting the nature of the pontifical government, from the occurrences of this period. For considerable intervals, the ruling members of the church were either too distracted with personal cares to think of those which regarded

their sacred office, or were unable to fix on any one of their body to whom they dared venture to intrust the weighty duties of their representation and defence. With a barbarian enemy taking his stand successively at the gates of their noblest cities, with famine rousing the people to madness, their sovereign at a distance, and unable to relieve them, either by counsel or by succours, — in this situation they were little inclined to weigh nicely the rules by which accessions were to be made to ecclesiastical authority. But still, even in this state of things, the struggle, though unobserved and unintended in the outward constitution of the civil and papal powers, was continued in the secret movement of their elements. Opportunities of advancing the strength of the papacy were not lost, though not seen in their full light : its independence was secured by circumstances which necessity and momentary impulses made profitable, when ambition was blind as to any systematic operation.

But at the beginning of the seventh century, the people of Rome possessed for their spiritual guide a man whose powers of mind and benevolent dispositions gave him a right to authority which would be recognised in all ages and countries where honour is to be gained by the free suffrages of mankind. Gregory was rightly designated the Great, if the title respected his personal intentions and endowments ; but he was indebted for it at least as much to the boldness with which he resumed the purpose of his most ambitious predecessors, as to the excellent qualities of his mind and heart. He found himself surrounded, on his accession to authority, by disorder and danger ; and he employed all the energy of his thoughts, expended his wealth, and sacrificed his repose, with the object ever in view of succouring the misery in which Italy was involved. But he also discovered, that, threatened on the one hand by the Lombards, and oppressed on the other by the monarchs who still feebly represented the imperial power at Ravenna, he must assert an authority which might act as a defence to the people under his

charge. Common policy would have led a man of his character to attempt this mode of remedying some of those disorders which he saw ruining the state, and vitally injuring the cause of religion and morality. But Gregory's mind was both too devout, and too sensible to impressions of a higher order, to be guided by mere policy. He contemplated, with unspeakable delight, the idea of a universal church, inspired by one spirit, and governed by one chief, the chosen vessel of Christ's authority on earth. To realise this idea was the desire in which were embraced all his plans, as well for the government as for the enriching of the church: and by this was modified and strengthened every exertion which he made for the benefit of his countrymen, and the distant provinces which owned his paternal sway. Thus the papacy was at the same time nourished and rendered respectable by his virtues; while the firm and open conduct with which he asserted its undivided authority, in the face of rival prelates, and against the emperor himself, gave the cause all the advantage it could receive from a skilful occupation of every debatable position.

The patriarchs of Constantinople appear to have derived confidence in their superiority, from the troubles which had so long oppressed the church in Italy; and John, who held the patriarchal dignity in the time of Gregory, had the vanity, when addressing the pontiff on the deposition of an heretical priest, to style himself, in almost every line of his letter, the universal bishop. Gregory, having twice gently reproved him, by his ministers, for this assumption of a title which he had not the shadow of a reason for adopting, at length addressed him in a letter, from which we learn with some distinctness what were his views respecting his own exclusive claim to that lofty designation. "You know," said he, "what peace you have found in the churches, and I know not for what motive you pretend to assume a name so calculated to scandalise your brethren. I pray you, I conjure you, I exhort you, with all possible mo-

deration, to resist those who flatter you, and give you this title so full of pride and extravagance. Know you not that the council of Macedon offered this honour to the bishops of Rome, and that none of them would accept it, lest they might seem to assume an exclusive right to the episcopacy?" In his reply to the letter of the emperor, who wrote to defend the patriarch, he says,—“We may, indeed, attribute the present public calamities solely to the ambition of the bishops. We destroy by our examples what we establish by our words. Our bones are consumed with fasts, and our souls are puffed up with pride: under the humblest clothing we hide the proudest hearts; and while we make our bed on ashes, we dream but of dignities. The primacy was given to Saint Peter; yet he is not called the universal apostle. All Europe groans under the yoke of the barbarians; the cities are destroyed, the fortresses ruined, the provinces ravaged, the lands left untilld; and in this state of things, the bishops, who ought to weep and humble themselves, are only intent on seeking new titles to amuse their vanity. Is it my personal cause that I defend? Is it not that of God, and the universal church? Many bishops of Constantinople have been heretics, and even heresiarchs, as Nestorius and Macedonius: if, then, he who filled that see were universal bishop, all the church would have fallen with them. As for me, I am the servant of all the bishops, so long as they live as bishops: but if any one should elevate himself against the will of God, I trust he will never abase mine, even with the sword.” His letter to the empress still further develops his ideas on the subject. “It grieves me,” he says, “that the emperor should endure him who desires to be styled bishop, to the exclusion and contempt of all the rest. True it is, that the sins of Gregory merit this: but Saint Peter has not committed any crime which should subject him to such treatment in these your days.”

Gregory concluded this correspondence by declaring that he desired thenceforth to be styled “the servant of

the servants of Jesus Christ,"—a title which has continued to designate, through every succeeding age, the supreme rulers of the Roman church. But it is evident, not only from the above, but from other circumstances recorded in the history of the times, that the emperor of the East treated the implied claims of the pontiff to supremacy with little respect. In the measure by which he endeavoured to repress that passion for a monastic life which thinned his army of its best leaders, and the offices of government of the most enlightened and experienced statesmen, Gregory's wishes were perseveringly opposed; and Maurice was allowed, with the sacrifice of but a small portion of his original law, to carry his politic regulations into effect. When the pontiff, moreover, succeeded in establishing a truce for Rome with the advancing Lombards, the same emperor applied epithets to his name indicative of the grossest folly; and there is no apparent reason to believe that Gregory made any attempt to assert his superiority to the dictates or censure of his imperial opponent. It is true, that at one moment he summons him to answer for his conduct before the tribunal of God; but, at another, he exclaims that he is but dust before him; that he is but a worm of earth, and would not have dared to remonstrate with him, had he not believed that he should thereby be rendering God service.*

But, notwithstanding the contradiction which appears in these terms, and the resistance perpetually manifested between the church and the chief authority of the state, the papacy was evidently greatly strengthened during the pontificate of Gregory. His zeal was sincere, his character unblemished, his abilities considerable, and, what was of the highest importance in the age in which he lived, he had a profound admiration for the outward splendour of religious worship. He found the people eagerly looking for the stimulants which are always needed in proportion to the decay of knowledge. The middle age between faith and scepticism, is every where

* Fleury. Basnage, Hist. lib. vii. c. 9. vol. ii. p. 388.

an age of superstitious rites, and gorgeous pomps and ceremonies. Gregory saw the immense advantage which might be derived from gaining complete control over the minds of the people while thus disposed; and there quickly arose, under his eye, a new plan for the service of the church, not less adapted to win popular admiration by its splendid details, than it was to secure attention by the authority from which it came. By means such as these, combined with the real worth of his character, Gregory left the papal chair far more securely settled on the lofty eminence where it had been placed, than it was when he ascended it. But Sabinian, who succeeded him, expressed little gratitude for the service he had thus performed: indignant at finding the treasury exhausted of its gold, he accused him of having ruined the see by his liberality; and would have proceeded, but for the menaces of both the clergy and the people, publicly to burn his writings. He did not live long after this attempt; and his sudden death was ascribed to a blow on the head inflicted by the angry shade of the departed saint. A truer cause, however, may be found, perhaps, in the fact, that he had made himself hated by the populace, by withdrawing the accustomed alms, that he might heal, as he pretended, the injuries inflicted by the liberality of Gregory; a mode of proceeding so little relished by his flock, that, whatever share they might have in his death, they conveyed his breathless body with contempt out of the city.

It was during the pontificate of Boniface III., who resided as Gregory's legate at the court of Constantinople, and owed his elevation to the emperor, that the Roman pontiff was first dignified with the much-disputed title of universal bishop. For this honour Boniface was indebted to the enmity existing between Phocas and the patriarch of his imperial city. He lived to enjoy his triumph only a few months; and several of his successors seem to have contented themselves with the duties of their station, without entering into direct collision with any rival in authority. It is, how-

ever, a singular circumstance, that to the attempts of Boniface IV., who obtained the papal dignity immediately after the pontiff just named, to bring back the separatists from Rome to her communion, a resistance was made by the celebrated Irish apostle Columban, breathing much of the freedom and intelligence of later days. Professing the most profound respect for the Holy See, but yet regarding the accusations of the schismatics as meriting attention, he boldly says to the pontiff, — “ Assemble a council ; for the things of which they accuse you are not trifles. It is your own fault if you have wandered from the true faith, or rendered it vain. It is reasonable that those who are younger than you should resist you, and continue to do so till the memory of the wicked Vigilius shall be abolished. If that which is said of you be true, you are no longer the head of the church ; you are but the tail of it, and it is your children who have taken the first rank. They will not cease to be your judges, although younger than you, because they have preserved the orthodox faith.” Alluding then to his elevation, he says, — “ Your honour is great ; but this ought to fill you with solicitude, lest you should do any thing to sully it. Your power will be in exact proportion to your right reason ; which is the true porter at the gates of heaven, which opens them, through knowledge of the truth, to those who are worthy, and closes them against the wicked, and contrary to whose decisions they can be neither shut nor opened. This is well known to all the world : no one is ignorant after what manner Jesus Christ has given you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. You imagine, perhaps, that you are elevated thereby above the rest of your brethren, and attribute to yourself a peculiar authority in matters of religion ; but do you forget, that if such a thought take possession of your heart, you will have no more power before God ? It is the unity of the faith which makes over all the earth the unity of power.”*

* Basnage, liv. vii. c. 10. vol. ii. p. 390. Platina, p. 87. Cave, *Scriptorum Eccles. Hist. Sæcul. Eutychn. t. i. p. 542.*

Honorius, who succeeded to the papacy after the two unimportant pontificates of Deusdedit and Boniface V., made a vain attempt to influence the Lombards to restore their king, Adalvaldus, whom they had deposed as a madman, and elected in his place an Arian named Ariovaldus. But the most conspicuous circumstance in his career, was his agreement with Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople, in establishing the celebrated edict by which it was intended to put an end to the Monothelite controversy, and render the renewal of it a crime against the laws of the empire. A long and fierce dispute has been carried on respecting the conduct of Honorius in this affair; but the question is, in reality, one of little importance. The language which he employs in the statement of his opinions, admits of being differently interpreted, according to the sentiments of those who judge it; while the willingness he evinced to unite with Sergius was as likely to spring from a true desire to silence the clamour which was then ruining the peace of the church, as it was to be the result of a narrow-sighted ambition. Reasonings, however, of this kind were not embraced by those who had the best means, if we can believe them unprejudiced, of deciding upon the affair; and Honorius, in the sixth general council, was solemnly anathematised, and classed with the known and most violent supporters of the Monothelite heresy.*

The death of this pontiff was followed by the pillage of the palace of the Lateran, — an outrage which had its origin with the emperor, and was committed by his own officers. Severinus was then placed in the papal chair, but his pontificate was not marked by any important event. The same observation applies to those of his successors, John IV. and Theodore; while of the misfortunes of Martin, who was elected on the death of the latter, we have already spoken at length. This persecuted pontiff was succeeded by Eugenius, who was in-

* Baronius and several other writers have argued strongly in favour of Honorius, and their arguments have been answered by Bashage with corresponding force and industry.

debted for his elevation to the influence of the imperial court, and his too ready tolerance of its reigning errors.* He was consequently regarded at Rome with equal suspicion and dislike ; and the people and the clergy, with the same breath that they fiercely rejected the synodical letter of the patriarch, forbade the pontiff's performing the ceremony of mass till he solemnly promised to reject it also.

Vitalian, the successor of Eugenius, had the merit of being a strict disciplinarian, and of sending Theodore to this country as archbishop of Canterbury. To him, also, is ascribed the introduction of music and singing in the service of the church. But he was not remarkable for either those talents or those virtues which distinguished some of his predecessors, or those follies and vices which disgraced others. The usurper Mezentius sought his favour by an appearance of profound veneration for his sacred character ; and, soon after ascending the throne, sent him a book of the Gospels written in letters of gold, and ornamented with the richest gems.† At his death, Deodatus II. was elected, who, after a pontificate undistinguished by any important struggle, left the dignity to be viewed as a prize too valuable for immediate disposal. Domnus then ascended the vacant chair after an interregnum of four months, and was worthily venerated for his piety, and the purity of his faith. The influence which this gave him, afforded a strong proof of the power which the Roman pontiffs might have acquired, without the intervention of any unfair or superstitious arts, by the mere force of learning and evident holiness. They were, by position, at this period, the light set upon the hill ; and the world would have gladly yielded them a homage which no change of opinion could have diminished. It was in the pontificate of Domnus that the church of Ravenna became permanently incorporated with that of Rome. Under his directions, moreover, the venerable capital recovered

* Platina.

† Platina, *Vite de Pontefici*, p. 128. Fleury, t. vii. l. 39. n. 25.

some portion of its early magnificence ; and the united zeal and liberality which he employed gave new power to the authority of his station.*

Agathon, the next pope, was not less conspicuous for the devoutness of his character ; and the story which is told of his curing, by a kiss, some leprous person whom he accidentally met, indicates not merely the growing superstition of the age, but the influence which the pontiff's piety had made upon the minds of the people. At his request it was that the emperor Constantine Pogonatus assembled the sixth general council : and it is somewhat singular to find that one of the main objects which his legates laboured at obtaining, was a reduction of the sum usually paid by the newly elected pontiff into the imperial treasury. For this indulgence, Agathon willingly confirmed the ancient law, that no pope should be ordained till his election had been formally recognised and confirmed at Constantinople.† The harmony which thus existed between the emperor and Agathon was happily continued through the pontificate of Leo II., in whose favour the monarch decreed that the new archbishop of Ravenna should receive his ordination at the hands of the pope. Leo, by his piety and eloquence, confirmed the good impression which had been made on the popular mind by the virtues of his predecessors : nor was it diminished in the short pontificate of Benedict II., who, to his charity to the poor, added a munificent liberality in adorning and repairing the various churches of his diocese. He possessed, also, sufficient interest at the court of the emperor, to obtain the important privilege for the Roman pontiffs, of being confirmed in their authority by the exarch of Ravenna, instead of having to make the long and difficult journey to Constantinople.

The pontificate of John V. was as unimportant as it was short ; and he was succeeded by Conon, whose age and infirmities were as unfavourable to the exercise of his high

* Platina.

† Fleury, *Hist. Ecclés.* t. ix. l. 40. n. 2. Basnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, liv. vii. c. 10.

functions, as they were to the enlargement of his authority. He had been elected in the face of two popular candidates for the papacy, whose separate factions, finding each other's power too nearly balanced for victory, determined on elevating some one indifferent to both. The only material error of which he is accused, is that of having, in the instance of the church of Syracuse, appointed a deacon whose vices unfitted him for so sacred an office ; and in that of Antioch, for having interfered, contrary to the laws of both the church and the empire, in the election of a patriarch.

Sergius occupied the papal chair to the beginning of the eighth century ; but, at the commencement of his pontificate, he saw himself opposed by two powerful rivals, and the palace of the Lateran was for some time besieged with open force by the partisans of these pretenders to the papacy. The contest was continued for a considerable period. Sergius, though supported by imperial influence, had to endure a seven years' exile before he could possess himself of the dignity ; and on his refusal to recognise the canons of the council in Trullo, was assailed by Justinian II. with all the weapons of imperial authority. The conflict was thus renewed, which had so long disturbed the peace of Christendom ; and another starting point given, from which the two great candidates for universal and unlimited power were to begin the race. It is evident that the pontiff had not yet acquired strength sufficient to oppose his rival with certainty of success. His predecessors had as often quailed before the sceptre, as the emperors had found themselves troubled by the Roman legates and their crosier. Even in the provinces under the immediate domination of the pope, his interference and decrees were repeatedly resisted, and his name treated with contemptuous disrespect. At the council of Toledo, held in the year 688, the archbishop of that city obtained a resolution in favour of his opinions, which not simply established his creed in opposition to that of the pontiff, but was couched in terms of haughty defi-

ance and rebuke.* The contest, therefore, was as yet unattended by palpable prognostics of the final triumph of the papacy : and had there been any regenerating principle in the government of the state ; could it have recovered its natural and legitimate control over that agitated world, of whose civilisation it was the growth ; mankind would never have beheld the establishment of a power, the existence and increase of which were to depend on its successful invasion of the temporal sovereignty.

The troubles which the church had suffered from the continual motions of half barbarian hordes were many and severe, but they produced an equivalent advantage. Amid all the struggles to which churchmen were urged by ambition, they displayed, as a body, some of the noblest instances of charity—of care for the poor and distressed—which the world had seen. Pressed by the frequent prospect of immediate ruin, they simultaneously acquired the virtues of resignation and the skill of politicians. It was to them the people owed their preservation when threatened on the one side by foreign enemies, and on the other by the tyranny of their rulers ; and till they themselves became oppressors, popular liberty found its best champions among the heads of the church. But when the progress of Christianity itself is considered, — that is, the very interests for which the church, with all its attendant powers, was called into existence,—doubt and dissatisfaction are almost the invariable result of the enquiry. In Rome, piety was shocked by the open contests which repeatedly took place by candidates for the papal dignity, and by the little less disgraceful plots with which the contending parties prepared for the onset. The provinces, perpetually appealed to on the subject of obedience to the supreme pontiff, saw their own pastors at one time yielding with submissive complacence to his decrees, at another resisting them both openly and in secret. An injury of the worst kind was thus inflicted on religion ; and it is not improbable but that, had the

* Dupin, *Bibliot. Pat.*, Councils of VI. Cent.

dominion of the church not been finally established by the policy of Rome, ecclesiastical authority would have sunk into a long, if not irrecoverable insignificance. Those supports, on the other hand, of Christian faith, which are to be found in the system itself, and which experience has ever proved to be the best it could have, were hidden from men's eyes by the unprofitable ingenuity of the vain and the curious: the pillars which God had placed in the temple were coated over with the most incongruous devices; and the lesson having been once taught, that faith might pay its tribute in gold or ceremony, instead of in works of holiness, the whole volume of Christian offices became rapidly deranged. This corruption in customs and opinions was speedily followed by a corresponding deterioration in the learning and literature of the age: the best minds began to sacrifice their energy to the illustration of points of trifling importance, and which rendered them insensible by degrees to the broad comprehensive plans of divine wisdom; while intellects of less strength were borne away by the sudden impulses of enthusiasm, or were confounded by the subtle distinctions of the prevalent dogmas. The popes themselves found ample occupation in resisting the opponents of their authority; and in all they did, even from the sincerest motives of piety, the ambition of their order, though their own minds were free from the spirit of emulation, acted as a crude and unwholesome leaven. Whatever might be the worth of individuals under such a state of things, it could act but as a momentary check to the evil tendencies of errors thus produced and thus cherished.

CHAP. XIII.

STATE OF THE EMPIRE, AND ITS SUCCESSIVE SOVEREIGNS. — CONTROVERSY RESPECTING IMAGES. — THE ACTS OF THE ICONOCLASTS.

SUCH was the state of the western church, when the seat of government in the East displayed by turns every species of wild and sanguinary tyranny. With the diminished consciousness of power, the sovereign grew baser in his character, and the people bolder in their resistance. Selfishness, cruelty, and cunning, thence became the adopted allies of royalty, and sedition the favourite idol of the multitude. The successful usurper no sooner took his seat on the throne of the Cæsars, than the same evil spirit came upon him, which had possessed the Neros and Caligulas of former days. Groaning beneath the scourge, the people cared not to recollect that the experiment which had exalted him was their own ; and again collecting their strength, the tyrant's blood was made to expiate both their error and his guilt. Justinian II., having, by the aid of some Bulgarian warriors, regained his throne, literally trampled under his feet the two successive invaders of his dignity. For six years he revelled in the unbounded gratification of revenge. At the end of that period, the Armenian, Bardanes Philippicus, led back the exiles whom his fury had driven from their homes, to the gates of Constantinople ; and both himself and his son, the last descendants of Heraclius, perished by the hands of the people.

Bardanes was allowed to enjoy, during a short reign of two years, all the pomp and splendour which a thirst for royalty could inspire. But his ostentation proved a bribe to rebellion ; and on the eve of Pentecost, while sleeping away the intoxication of a sumptuous repast, he was seized by the officers of his household, dragged

to the hippodrome, deprived of his sight, and deposed. Artemius, his secretary, was then placed on the throne, with the title of Anastasius II.; and had moderation and piety been rightly estimated in those distracted times, he might by his virtues have retarded for some years the ruin of the empire. But he was dethroned in a few months by his rebellious army, who elected for their chief a native of Natoha, under the name of Theodosius III. Fourteen months was the limit assigned to the authority of the new monarch. At the end of that period he descended the throne, and having done nothing to incur the hatred of his subjects, was permitted, like his predecessor, to assume the habit of a monk. A man of far different character obtained the present suffrages of the capricious multitude. Leo was general of the troops in the eastern provinces, and the able opposition he had made to the arms of the Saracens gave him a popularity, against which in those days few monarchs could have supported themselves in the government. But his long reign of twenty-four years was marked with troubles and disorders of the most appalling kind. It was under him that that fearful conflict respecting the adoration of images began, which so often deluged the streets of Constantinople with blood, and shamed the Christian world by a controversy at which real idolaters might have blushed.*

The internal troubles which throughout the whole of his reign tore the bosom of the empire, were coupled with those which resulted from the increasing successes of the Moslem. In the year 718, a Mahometan caliph appeared at the gates of Constantinople itself; and it was only by one of those sudden bursts of devotion, supported by a pretended miracle, which sometimes rouse a falling people, that the infidels were obliged to raise the siege. But though thus driven from the capital, they continued to harass every quarter of the empire: the richest provinces fell into their hands; and as if

* Theophanes, *Chronographia*, n. 336. Par. 1655. Baronius, *Annales Eccles.*

unsatisfied with the golden harvest which thus spread before them, they rapidly passed the extreme boundaries of the East, and established their dominion on the ruins of the Gothic dynasty in Spain. The successes which attended their arms were accompanied with a proportionable degree of zeal for the diffusion of their faith ; and the caliph Omar, a man whose talents and dignified virtues only wanted Christianity to render them valuable to the world, employed all his influence to make conversions as well as conquests. In his zeal for the religion he professed, he wrote to the emperor Leo, exhorting him to adopt the creed of the Koran ; and though he failed in this, he was not discouraged from assailing the consciences of less elevated Christians by the gold of his treasures, and promises of safety and patronage. His successor interfered still more directly in the affairs of the Christian church, by employing numerous emissaries to effect the very object which engaged the hands and the consciences of the Iconoclasts. In their execution of this design, the officers of the caliph were accompanied by a band of determined devotees, and the Christian inhabitants of the towns they entered fled precipitately at their approach. Not an image or a painting escaped destruction where they appeared ; and their master, who had been promised as a reward a reign of thirty years by some Iconoclast in disguise, saw no reason to doubt the fulfilment of the prophecy.

While the Saracens were thus pursuing their triumphs, and attacking the Christian world by all the arts they could employ, the emperor Leo contented himself with laying the foundation of his authority too deep to allow of its being torn up by the popular caprice to which he had been indebted for his elevation. But his policy was in conformity with the spirit of the age : designing and intolerant, he assailed with relentless violence whoever opposed his views, and all who could be made to contribute by their destruction to the speedier execution of his purpose. The Roman churches narrowly

escaped being despoiled by his agents of their most valuable treasures ; and the pontiff, Gregory II., was to have been sacrificed to soothe the disappointed rapacity of the tyrant. To manifest his devotion, he compelled the Jews to submit to baptism, which, rather than perish, they received, but satisfied their conscience by washing themselves after the ceremony, to annul, as they supposed, its effects. The same force was employed against the Montanists, who, combining with their Christian knowledge and strictness of discipline a sterner fortitude, perished in the flames of their churches, rather than obey the command of their persecutor.*

The Christian world saw little reason to rejoice at the accession of Leo's son and successor, Constantine Copronymus. Imbued with all the vices of his father, he was greatly inferior to him in ability ; and his first excesses again called forth the seditious spirit of the people. Led on by Artabases, the husband of his sister, and excited by the powerful persuasions of the patriarch Anastasius, they gained a speedy victory over his guards ; and he was supposed to have perished in the conflict. But, at the moment when the conquerors were in the height of their rejoicing, Constantine appeared among them ; and having, with instant vengeance, deprived Artabases and the patriarch of their eyes, carried them forth in scorn to the scene of the public games.† The temper of such a man was not likely to be improved by events of this kind ; and the reign of Constantine was marked throughout with cruelty and oppression. One instance of the violence which distinguished his government has been especially recorded as a specimen of the whole. The governor of Natolia, anticipating the wishes of his master, assembled at Ephesus the numerous monastic bodies scattered over the different provinces of Thrace. When gathered together, he led them to a plain in the neighbourhood of the city, and there commanded them, on pain of the emperor's displeasure,

* Theophanes, p. 336.

† Maunbourg says that he was advised to this act by Jews. *Hist. des Iconoclastes*, vol. i. p. 16.

immediately to assume a white garment, and enter, contrary to the rules of their order and their vows, into the marriage state. Some yielded to their fears, and renounced the oaths they had taken; others remained firm, and having been deprived of their eyes on the spot, were either put to death, or sent exiles to the isle of Cyprus. The following year the governor resumed his proceedings. Not a monastery escaped proscription. The edifices which had proved the asylum of the banished monks were publicly sold: even the sacred vessels were not reserved; while the books and relics which had been stored up, by the mingled respect for learning and the superstition which had prevailed in the cloisters, were piled up and burnt. Of the monks who remained to witness these tyrannous acts, many were put to death with the most cruel barbarity; others lost their eyes, and the rest were sent into exile. Constantine, on being informed of what had taken place, wrote letters to the governor, expressive of his great admiration of the measures he had pursued; the consequence of which was, that the persecution thus begun in Naxos was continued by the loyal chiefs of numerous other provinces.*

The reign of this emperor was protracted to the year 775. His character, like that of his father, has been drawn in the darkest colours by the historians of the church, who set forth the adoration of images as one of the essentials of Christian worship: but he has not wanted defenders; and though there is too great a mass of evidence against him to let us doubt of his tyranny, there is enough also in his favour to allow of our giving him credit for more moderation in his pleasures, and more prudence in his conduct, than polemical chroniclers would lead us to believe. He was succeeded by his son Leo, surnamed Chazan, who treated the various orders of monks with some degree of tolerance and indulgence; and is supposed, but apparently without just

* Fleury, *Hist. Eccl's.* t. ix. l. 44. n. 7. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. vi. c. 48. Basnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, vol. ii. liv. 23. c. 3.

reason, to have favoured the adoration of images. His reign lasted but five years ; and his successor being a lad only ten years old, the government fell into the hands of the empress Irene, a woman of considerable talent, of still greater ambition, and of a spirit rarely found in her sex. She had the policy to propose an alliance with Charlemagne, then the most flourishing prince in the West, and to demand his daughter in marriage for the young emperor ; but subsequent events induced her to break the contract, and to marry her son to the daughter of one of her ministers. It was the object of her designs to retain as long and wide a grasp of the imperial power as circumstances and her own politic contrivances would allow. To these intentions Constantine soon after his marriage began openly to oppose himself : but Irene formed a party in the state which effectually subdued for a time the spirit of the prince ; and he continued to remain as subject to her sway as in the earliest period of boyhood. This, however, was not sufficient to satisfy the ambition of the empress : she had determined to reign alone ; and in this resolution she was encouraged by her interested courtiers, who, taking advantage of female weakness, found it easy to foster her passion for rule, till it overcame every sentiment of nature and justice.*

Her first attempt to induce the troops to proclaim her as their sole sovereign utterly failed ; and she lost for a time even the rank and dignity she possessed. But her resources were not exhausted ; the authority she had forfeited was regained ; and Constantine, having scandalised the people, and the most respectable of the clergy, by the unlawful divorce of his wife, and a second marriage, lost all power of resisting her attempts upon his throne. The contest was at length brought to an issue : Irene saw him persecuting with

* Theophanes reports that Leo openly expressed his fears to those who desired him to name his son as his successor, observing, that his tender years would expose him to the violence and machinations of enemies ; but that the courtiers having taken the most solemn oaths to protect him, he presented the young prince to them as the gift of Christ and the church. *Chronographia*, 379.

fearless indignation the venerable saints Theodore and Plato, who had ventured on the bold measure of excommunicating him on account of his marriage ; and at the moment when the people were most irritated at the treatment of these holy men, she put herself at their head, had her son seized, and thrown into a dungeon, and forthwith ordered his eyes to be put out ; a command which was performed with such haste and violence, that the unfortunate emperor perished under the operation. This event occurred in the year 797 ; and Irene reigned sole sovereign of the East till the second year of the following century. We shall now, therefore, retrace our steps, and look more particularly at some of those circumstances which characterised the age.*

The minds of men had undergone a somewhat singular change, at this period, in respect to the objects of theological controversy. It was no longer on the mystery of the Incarnation, on the doctrines of grace and free-will, on the character and designs of the Deity, that their thoughts rested with the pertinacious spirit of enquiry. Most of the questions which regarded these higher matters of speculation were now for some time to be almost lost sight of in those which pertained to the use or sacredness of images. More than four centuries had passed since the veneration so naturally felt for the relics or remains of departed saints had begun to degenerate into gross superstition. In the fifth century, a particular worship was paid them in various parts of the Christian world ; and the common people gave a ready credence to the eloquent eulogiums of their instructors on the miraculous powers of these sacred deposits. But the same corruption of the purity of the faith, the same decline of knowledge and spirituality which led to this worshipping of relics, led also to the introduction of images, and their subsequent adoration. It appears, from a passage in one of the earliest historians of the church, that a statue of Christ existed as

* Theophanes, though an admirer of Irene's party, openly attributes this conduct to the spirit of evil.

early as the fourth century ; and that it was equally an object of profound veneration to the Christians, and of hatred to the heathens.* The authenticity of this passage is strongly suspected ; but indubitable evidence exists of the employment of paintings, and other similar devices, in the fifth century, to excite devout recollections of the great events of sacred history. There is, however, equal evidence to show that the most learned fathers of the church were far from approving of the custom ; and that it was not till long after the introduction of paintings and statues, as the ornaments of Christian edifices, that they were regarded as objects of adoration. To the newly converted multitudes of heathen nations, they afforded a sort of equivalent for that splendid paraphernalia which delighted the senses of their forefathers in the worship of Jupiter and his tributaries. This formed a broad ground-work for the developement of the system which lay wrapped up in the incipient corruptions of Christianity. Before the close of the sixth century, numerous images are said to have existed which the people were taught to believe of divine original. The emperors and their lieutenants employed these pretended gifts of heaven to inspire their soldiers with courage in the day of battle ; and even ambassadors trusted to their influence to secure the success of their diplomatic addresses.† Both the Jews and the pagans viewed with astonishment the daily increase of images in the Christian temples ; and while the former argued against them out of the law of Moses, the latter ridiculed the worshippers for falling back upon customs which it appeared to have been the original design of their religion to overthrow. Many subtle distinctions were employed by the theological casuists who undertook the task of answering these opponents ; and, in the seventh century, the minds both of the people and the clergy in general were so well satisfied as to the legality and expediency of using images as instruments of devo-

* Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. c. 21.

† Basnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, liv. xxii. c. 6. Theophylact, l. v. p. 92. Gregory, lib. vii. ep. 110.

tion, that the controversy was carried on with little or no interest. The genuine opinion of some of the best and most pious men of the age was, that they were useful for awakening the dull minds which could not rise to the contemplation of spiritual mysteries without a previous appeal to the senses. This was the sentiment of Gregory I., who speaks in the plainest terms against the worship of any thing made with hands, but manifestly yields to the notion, that the representatives of sacred objects and events might be placed in churches both with safety and with profit. The same idea, no doubt, gave rise to the canon of the council of Quinisextum, by which it was decreed that Christ should thenceforth be represented, not under the shape of a lamb, but in his proper human form ; while, at the same time, those typical pictures of him seem to have been declared venerable ; and the cross itself was ordered to be revered by a separate canon.* The letter in which Gregory most distinctly expresses his opinion on the subject was addressed to Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, who, terrified and disgusted at observing that the people had begun to pay religious worship to the images which adorned his church, threw them down and destroyed them. Having been informed of the circumstance, Gregory thus addressed him :—" We praise you," says he, " for preventing the people from worshipping the images, but we reprove you for breaking them : tell me, my brother, what other bishop has ever committed such an act ? Ought not the unwontedness of the thing to have deterred you from it, if no other reason had been to be found ? Should you not have been cautious not to make it supposed that you considered your own wisdom superior to that of all other men ? There is a wide difference between the worship of an image, and the employment of an historical representation, teaching us

* The interpretation of the former of these canons has been the subject of great dispute between the controversialists on the subject of images ; some of them asserting that the representation of Christ as a lamb was forbidden, others as broadly asserting that it was commended. Baronius. Basnage. Du Pin.

whom we ought to worship: for that which those who can read become acquainted with from Scripture, those who cannot learn with their eyes from a picture. The uneducated are instructed by it as to what they ought to do: it is a book to them who know not a letter; and, therefore, it is of the utmost use to barbarians, for whom, as living among them, you ought to entertain the greatest solicitude, and whom you should be ever cautious not to offend by any act of indiscreet zeal. Certain it is, that you ought not to destroy those things which have been placed in the church, not as objects of worship, but for the instruction of the unlearned. The usage of ancient times allowed pictures describing sacred events to be placed in churches; and had your zeal been tempered with prudence, it would not have prompted you to tear them, or to commit an act which has separated a portion of your flock from your communion. It is your duty, then, under these circumstances, to recall your people; to let them know that you would not have broken the images had you not seen them treated with adoration; and that you will allow them for the future in your church, if they be used as a means of instruction only, and not regarded as objects of worship. Do not prohibit images; but while you prevent their being worshipped in any manner whatever, rouse your people by sacred representations to repentance, and the adoration of the Holy Trinity." The opinions which form the basis of this epistle were, no doubt, the same as those which gave occasion to that canon of the council of Quinisextum, which respected the representation of Christ under the form of a lamb; and that also which declared the cross to be an object of particular reverence.

In the eighth century the controversy assumed a more formidable character than it had hitherto manifested. Every quarter of the Christian world felt the influence of the growing evil; and while there were doubtless many excellent men whom custom and an ardent imagination attached to the superstition, there were many more who promoted, and even corrupted, if

we may so speak, the superstition for the basest purposes of private emolument. The emperor Philip Bardanes was the first to oppose the system with the hand of authority. A monothelite himself, he could endure nothing which seemed to insult the principles of the party; and he accordingly ordered a painting, which represented the assembling of the sixth council, in which the monothelites had been condemned, to be taken from its place in the church of St. Sophia. If a person has begun to act from the excitement of private or personal feeling, it is a difficult matter to determine in what measure he deserves the praise of conscientiousness, when he preserves the same line of conduct apparently only for the public good. Bardanes, however, having satisfied his resentment by the removal of the obnoxious picture, soon after sent a letter to the Roman pontiff, commanding the instant displacement of all images and other such objects from every building devoted to public worship. This order was answered by the haughty primate, condemning the emperor as an apostate, and directing six paintings, representing the councils, to be forthwith executed, and placed in the porch of St. Peter.*

The death of Bardanes stopped the contest; but it was recommenced with greater violence than ever by the new emperor, Leo the Isaurian. In the month of January, 730, he issued a decree condemning image-worship, and ordered the patriarch of Constantinople to add his authority to the document. This the aged prelate refused to do, and Leo immediately expelled him with barbarous violence from the city. A dangerous tumult, excited by the appeals which had been made to the prejudices of the people, was but just quelled, when the decree above mentioned again threw the capital and its neighbourhood into a state of universal agitation. The objects on which thousands of devout worshippers had gazed with passionate affection were

* Thus, says Maunbourg, did Leo, producing at once that which he had long kept concealed in his heart, become an heresiarch. *Hist. des Iconoclastes*, vol. i. p. 46.

treated with a contempt uncalled for by necessity, and culpable as an indication of bad and intemperate feeling. Even the ancient crucifix which Constantine, it was said, had erected in the vestibule of his palace, in memory of his conversion by the heavenly vision, was devoted to destruction ; and the strokes of the hatchet were directed to the serene countenance of the Saviour, who, to the multitude, seemed to be again suffering under the vindictive hands of his murderers. The numerous women who were present vented their feelings, first in prayers that the holy image might be spared, and then in bitter execrations on the sacrilegious executor of the imperial commands. But their prayers and threats were alike unheeded ; and the image was about to fall to the ground, when the half-frantic females rushed to the ladder on which the assailant stood, flung him to the earth, and tore him limb from limb, as he expired beneath their blows.

Leo now began a persecution of the image-worshippers, which was carried on with a degree of barbarity ill becoming a man who professed himself zealous for Christianity, and desirous of removing the scandal which its corruptions had given rise to among the Jews and Mahometans. Numbers, both of the clergy and the laity, were cruelly put to death for persisting in their refusal to destroy images and paintings, which, in the state their minds then were, they could not have done without violence to the dictates of their conscience. Nor was he contented with evincing his rage by the execution of those unfortunate persons who might be supposed to resist his orders from a gross and brutish obstinacy. Many of the most respectable scholars which that age of approaching darkness produced in the East were put to death in this persecution ; and, to crown his proceedings with an act of the most flagitious description, he punished the refusal of the twelve learned superintendants of the public library to join in his measures, by burning both them and the books over which they had charge.

The bold and haughty tone in which Gregory the Second, and his successor of the same name, addressed the emperor on the subject of image-worship, and on the measures he pursued for its extirpation, affords a too evident proof of the rapid progress of that pride and love of dominion in the rulers of the Roman church, which were so soon to convert them into worse persecutors than Leo the Isaurian. Their conduct had also the effect of confirming the emperor in his persecuting disposition. He had every reason to regard those whom they favoured as his enemies; and it is little surprising, therefore, to find that when his son Constantine came to the throne, that prince succeeded at the same time to his hatred of the image-worshippers.* Constantine, however, had the wisdom to show to the world that he acted on principles which might be supported by reason and argument; and it is lamentable to know that a cause which might have been nobly defended by such means, was so disgraced, as well as so badly defended, by the exercise of force and cruelty. “Satan,” says the decree of the council which was held shortly after the accession of the new emperor, “not being able to endure the beauty of the church, has insensibly brought back idolatry under the semblance of Christianity, by obtaining that great honours should be paid to created things. It is on this account that the Saviour, who, in former times, sent his apostles for the destruction of idolatry, has now raised up the emperors as his servants in the same cause, and to instruct us, and overthrow the inventions of the devil.” How was it, we may ask in astonishment, that men who could make use of the name of the apostles, and remember the victory which those preachers of the Gospel obtained with the arms of love and charity — how was it, that they could cite the example of such a conquest over idolatry, and then proceed to attempt the extirpation of like errors by the employment of means so utterly, so manifestly opposite?

The publication of the decree above mentioned was a

* Fleury. Dupin. Basnage.

signal for the commission of every species of excess against those who, either out of obstinacy, or from the dictates of conscience, attempted to preserve the relics of their former worship. So strong was the hatred shown by the Iconoclastes, or image-breakers, that they spared not the most precious ornaments of the churches to effect their design: walls even were pulled down which possessed any mark of an image, and the vessels of the altar were changed from a similar feeling. As the monks were those who took the chief part in resisting the imperial ordinance, they were the most frequent victims of its severity; and the fraternity of Mount Saint Auxentius, a monastery near Nicomedia, is celebrated in the annals of the age for its zeal and its martyrs. Stephen, the head of these confessors, was especially distinguished for his open opposition to the suppression of images; and his sentiments reaching the ears of the emperor, the monarch sent a messenger to him, demanding his assent to the law which had been lately passed. "No," said Stephen, to the bearer of this message, "I cannot draw upon myself the malediction of the prophet by calling that which is bitter sweet. I am prepared to die for the honour of the holy images. Though I had but as much blood in my body as I could hold in the palm of my hand, I should wish to shed it for the image of Jesus Christ. Carry back the nourishment, then, which the imperial heresiarch has sent me: the oil of a sinner shall never embalm my head."* The magnanimous emperor of the East allowed himself to be violently enraged at this reply, and sent back his messenger with a party of soldiers, who had directions to remove the monk from his narrow cell in the rock, and confine him in the neighbouring monastery till notice was given them respecting his further destination. He was soon after this permitted to return to his cell; but was again seized, sent into exile, recalled, and at last, after suffering innumerable hardships, was thrown into a prison at Constantinople. In this place he met with no

* Baronius, Ann. Eccles. an. 752.

fewer than 342 monks of various provinces, and whose mutilated persons proved at once what had been their profession, and how great was the barbarity of their persecutor. Stephen was deeply affected at the spectacle thus presented to him ; and while he blessed God for having given his brethren fortitude to suffer in the cause of righteousness, he lamented that he had not yet himself endured hardships like theirs in its defence. His known piety and resignation placed him at once at the head of the poor unfortunates who crowded the prison. They rejoiced in the presence of a man who was so well prepared to meet every kind of evil, rather than deny the principles for which they suffered : his long experience in all the exercises of devotion recommended him to them as one who could best direct them in their own addresses to heaven ; and he was thus uniformly regarded as the true pastor of their melancholy assembly. Under his guidance, the worship of the church was performed with all the regularity which they had been accustomed to in their monasteries : an air of comfort was thus diffused through the prison ; and even the guards and keepers, it is said, affected by his mildness and devotion, looked upon him with respect and affection. The emperor, on being made acquainted with these circumstances, sent an order for Stephen's immediate execution ; but he is reported to have feared, that the ordinary modes of punishment would not expose the object of his hate to sufficient torment, and to have lamented, in the presence of his courtiers, that he could not rid himself of the detestable monk so speedily as he desired. He had no sooner thus expressed his wishes, than a party of the attendants ran hastily to the prison, seized the confessor, and having tied ropes to the chains with which he was bound, dragged him into the street, where his body was mangled with a brutality at which humanity shudders.*

* Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 367. Nothing could more disgrace a monarch than the means which he employed, according to this historian, to make his victims ridiculous, while they were suffering the most grievous miseries.

The murder of Stephen was followed by that of numerous other monks ; and there is little reason to doubt that the emperor Constantine Copronymus, while endeavouring to purify the church from its multifarious superstitions, disgraced the cause by the commission of the most barbarous excesses. It must, however, be borne in mind, that those who have handed down the most diffuse accounts of his proceedings, were exposed, while describing them, to the strong influence of prejudice ; and that the Iconoclastic emperor, though a violent persecutor, may have been painted in colours some shades darker than sober truth would warrant. One thing is certain : the party who so enthusiastically resisted the religious changes attempted by the emperor, omitted no opportunity of assailing his throne by every art of sedition. In some degree, therefore, his persecution might have had the nature of a war with rebels ; and his guilt been proportionally diminished by his apprehension of danger to the state. The character of a suspicious tyrant is sufficiently odious ; but it is a work of charity if, by giving a monarch the name of tyrant, we can save him from that of a persecutor.

Leo IV. was of a milder character than his father ; and his unwillingness to endanger the peace of his own reign, or the safety of his son, induced him to treat the party with tolerance, which had suffered so severely under the late emperor. His name has, therefore, been viewed with more lenity than that of his predecessor ; and it is even stated that, for some portion of his reign, he merited the title of pious. But he forfeited this praise, according to the Iconoclastic historians, by the conclusion of his career. His wife, Irene, was warmly devoted to the worship of images ; and, contrary to his prohibition, she was supplied with these objects of her veneration by some of the officers of the palace. The idols were discovered in her bed-room ; and Leo determined on visiting the violation of his orders with condign punishment. One of the unfortunate courtiers

* Theophanes, *Chronographia*.

implicated in the affair died under the tortures to which they were subjected ; and the empress, vainly endeavouring to deny the charge, or excuse herself on the pretence of not having been privy to the introduction of the images, was threatened with immediate divorcement. But before this threat could be put in execution Leo breathed his last. A splendid crown, which had been deposited with sacred munificence among the treasures of Saint Sophia, attracted his attention ; and, with sacrilegious hands, he removed it from the sanctuary to place it on his own brows. Scarcely had he appeared before the people, adorned with the brilliant bauble, when his brain was struck with intense agony, and he expired in equal pain and terror. Such is the common account of this emperor's end ; but there is another, which purports that he perished by poison, administered by the enraged Irene, to secure at once her safety and the empire.

The Iconoclasts again raised their heads at seeing the empress ascend the throne as the guardian of her youthful son. But the opposite party was too strong to permit of any precipitate measure in their favour ; and Irene was obliged to proceed in her designs with the most cautious policy. She began, therefore, by simply allowing them to hold their opinions without fear of punishment. Her next step was to abolish the edicts of Constantine against them ; and this was followed up by the publication of stories likely to affect the minds of her subjects in favour of their opinions. In all these proceedings, she was narrowly watched by the patriarch Paul, whose feelings were strongly opposed to the superstition it was her aim to re-establish. No means were left unemployed to induce him to relax his opposition ; but finding the attempt vain, she boldly assured the people that he was struck with so deep a remorse at the conduct he had pursued, that he had voluntarily resigned his office, and died suddenly of a broken heart. The patriarch, indeed, never did again appear before his flock ; and his death was as sudden as

the empress described: but that he died of grief for having resisted the worship of images, has been doubted by every historian not blindly attached to the party he opposed.* His successor, Tiresias, the creature of Irene, pursued the cautious course marked out by his mistress; and, instead of venturing to restore the images which had been cast down by an act of authority proceeding from himself or the empress, he declared his intention of appealing on the subject to the consideration of a general council. Letters were accordingly despatched to pope Adrian, who was requested to send his legates to the meeting, and also to the several bishops and the most distinguished clergy of the East. In these epistles Tiresias, who, till his exaltation, had neither received holy orders, nor possessed even the lowest office in the church, deemed it expedient to deliver a full profession of his faith; and among its chief articles was that which respected the worship of images.† The reply of Adrian to the imperial rescript contained the strongest expressions of amity and zeal; and, after lamenting the disorders which had afflicted the church, he continues: “ I implore you to render that homage to images, which we, following the tradition of our fathers, pay them in the West. We send you those passages from the fathers on which this holy usage is established. We implore you, before your knees and at your feet, to re-establish images as they before existed; and if this cannot be effected, because of the heretics, without a council being held, then let that false council be first condemned which was held against all rule, and

* Maimbourg's statement is decidedly in favour of Paul's conversion and voluntary abdication, and denies the fact of the popularity of the Iconoclasts: these opinions, says he, existed no longer but among the officers and soldiers, and those profligate bishops who had so unworthily bartered their souls and their religion to obtain the favour of the prince, and who yet laboured to maintain their error when the generous penitence of Paul afforded the empress a fine occasion to ruin it in form, and without risk. *Hist. des Iconoclastes*, vol. i. liv. iii. p. 285. These words are but a copy of those of Theophanes, who states that Paul, finding himself afflicted with a grievous disease, sent for the empress, and then with many tears declared his sorrow that he had ever ascended the patriarchal throne, and his determination to vacate it. *Chronographia*, p. 385.

† Fleury, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, liv. xlv. n. 8. Spanheim, *Hist. Christ. Secul. VIII. Opera*, p. 130.

let it be understood that there shall be full liberty of discussion." He then goes into the explication of the principles on which images were to be worshipped; and concludes with a strong appeal to the emperor on the subject of his own claims; on the injustice with which the church of St. Peter had been deprived of its rights; and on the guilt and folly of the act which had been committed in placing Tiresias, a simple layman, on the patriarchal throne; plainly stating, that he could only dare to acknowledge him on condition that he was found to be a firm and zealous defender of images, and all things pertaining to the doctrines of the church.*

The situation of the Christians in Palestine, and the other provinces subject to the power of the Saracens, prevented the results which Tiresias had hoped would follow from his letters to the prelates of that quarter of the empire. Aaroun al Raschid, the celebrated warrior, with whom the noblest spirits of Europe deemed it an increase of glory to be compared, was a fierce persecutor of the opponents of his faith. The bearers of the patriarch's letters, consequently, had scarcely reached the borders of Syria, when they were warned by the monks who inhabited the deserts to proceed no further. To assure, however, the council of the state of religion among them, the father deputed two of their number to publish their opinions to the assembly, and thereby remove all doubt as to their perfect agreement on the subject of images.

A. D.
786. Irene and her coadjutors now considered that the proposed council might be held with safety. Constantinople was filled with bishops, abbots, and other ecclesiastics, from all parts of the empire, and the Iconolatres felt themselves to be on the point of securing a splendid and permanent triumph over the opposite sect. But they had miscalculated the strength of that party. The assembly had scarcely met when a large body of catechumens and others began to express their feelings in

* Baronius fully allows, notwithstanding Tiresias's profession in favour of images, that his elevation was inconsistent with the rule of the church.

frequent murmurs of discontent : these by degrees increased into the louder cries of positive resistance and tumult, till at length the empress found it necessary to summon the guards to her defence. But, to the consternation of the council, the soldiers themselves refused to act, and the members of the assembly, rushing in terror from the church, heard the multitude insultingly exclaim as they departed, " we have conquered." The patriarch, however, remained behind, and proceeding to the altar, performed the solemn ceremony of the mass, exhibiting, whatever might be the error of his designs, a fine contrast by his courage and his devotion to the rude and impious violence of the crowd.

The policy of the empress was strongly evinced in the means she employed to overcome the effects of this defeat. Sedulously spreading a report that the Saracens had broken the truce which had been formed, and made irruptions into the provinces of Thrace, she pretended that it was necessary to raise a force immediately for their expulsion from the invaded territory. The imperial attendants accordingly forthwith commenced their journey into Bithynia, and with them were carried the troops who had refused to support the council. On their departure the army under the command of Stauracius entered Constantinople, and was kept there effectually to suppress the spirit of disorder which had been excited by the late proceedings. New summonses were then issued to the various ecclesiastics who presided at the previous meeting, and the council was appointed to reassemble at Nice, as a place less likely to be disturbed by popular tumults. The most opposite views are taken of this synod by the writers of the different parties ; and it is evident that all which determined passion and prejudice, aided by policy and authority, could do to establish their purpose, was attempted in its decisions. On one side it is said that every thing was ordered with the utmost regularity ; that the legates of the pope occupied the first place in the assembly, indicating thereby their office as the pon-

tiff's representatives ; that letters were read from the patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, stating their assent to the first six general councils, but their rejection of that lately held at Constantinople*, and that the absence of these patriarchs and their clergy was not to be considered as interfering with the authority or measures of the council, their not appearing being solely caused by the danger which must have been incurred had they left their dioceses. In the comparison on the other hand, which writers of the opposite side have instituted between this council of Nice and that of Constantinople, the particulars thus boldly asserted are as strenuously contradicted. The Roman legates had been sent into the East, it is stated, not to take a part in the disputes of the assembly, but for another purpose, and on their return were punished by deposition for the responsibility they had assumed. Of the monks who were represented as the legates of the eastern patriarchs, it is similarly affirmed that those dignitaries were so far from authorising any one to act in their name, that they were wholly ignorant of the proceedings about to take place. It is said, moreover, that while the most perfect approbation of the previous assembly was exhibited by all classes of the community ; while the bishops, the people, and the military manifested equal readiness to forward its meeting, this was on all sides opposed ; and that if both councils are equally destitute of authority, the one at least was unattended by fraud, while the other in all its arrangements was influenced by the dishonest policy of the empress.†

These accounts admit of some modification. It is obvious that no assembly whose professed object it is to deliberate on the validity of religious institutions, ought to be regarded as authoritative, if it meet under the

* Fleury, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, liv. xlv. n. 25. Maimbourg, *Hist. des Iconoclastes*, vol. i. p. 302, says, that the council of Nice being held nearly a year after that of Constantinople, the legates had in that time received authority for their proceedings.

† Basnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, liv. xxiii. c. 5. It is worthy of remark that Fleury, after mentioning, that in one of the sessions of the council the authority of the fathers was cited in support of images, acknowledges that the discourse ascribed to Athanasius is probably not genuine.

control of powerful partisans, and manifest throughout its proceedings the determination of faction to carry its designs. But if there be any truth in history, or it be fair to draw an inference from the strong indications of correlative testimonies, the above was the case with both the councils in question. Each party employed every means it could command to establish its opinions: each lost sight of the rules by which a Christian assembly ought to be characterised; and to neither should have been ascribed the slightest measure of authority over the opinions or practices of the church. That a large mass of the people was to be found with both parties, is proved by the very circumstance of their alternate success and defeat. The question in dispute was one which it essentially depended on the dispositions of the multitude to settle; it was one which appealed directly to popular feeling; and however theologians might determine it in their debates, the final decision was sure to emanate from the people. It is, therefore, a useless attempt to make it appear that the subjects of the empire were driven to the worship of images by an act of power. The establishment of the superstition affords indubitable evidence that their minds were in that state in which it required but one cautious effort of policy to plunge them into the depths of error.

Whatever, however, were the intentions of the chief actors in the council of Nice, it presented the venerable aspect of an assembly formed according to the primitive rule of the church, and consisting of its wisest and most dignified members. Its meetings were held in the cathedral of St. Sophia. The principal officers of the court, at the head of whom was the first secretary Nicéphorus, represented in themselves the splendour and authority of the state. In singular contrast to this body of nobles appeared the numerous bishops and monks who had suffered mutilation in the reign of Copronymus, or had only just returned from exile; and, before the council commenced its proceedings, all eyes were fixed

with equal joy and respect on the heroic Plato, and the scarcely less venerable Theophanes, whom neither the threats nor the proffered honours of Leo had been able to corrupt. The assembly was opened by Tiresias on the 24th of September, and the address of the patriarch being concluded, the letters were read which had been received from the emperor and the pope. Three bishops, Basil of Ancyra, Theodore of Mysa, and Theodosius of Armonium, then presented themselves, and having obtained permission to speak, declared their penitence for the share they had taken in the late council, by anathematising its canons. The two former having expressed themselves to this purpose, the bishop of Armonium addressed the assembly at great length, and with a more passionate show of grief. "I call you to witness, holy fathers," was the conclusion of his written appeal, "I have sinned against heaven and before you. Receive me even as God received me, a gluttonous man, an adulterer, and a robber. Seek me even as Christ sought me, a wandering sheep that was perishing, and which he carried on his shoulders, and there will be joy in heaven, before God and his angels, for my salvation and my penitence, effected, most sacred lords, through your intercession." He then added, "Cursed be they who adore not the venerable images. Cursed be they who dare to abuse and blaspheme the venerable images, and to call them idols. Cursed be they who do not diligently teach, that all who love Christ must adore the venerable images, and that the sacred images of all the saints are to be adored, who have from the beginning served God. Cursed be the slanderers of Christians, that is, the breakers of images."

Theodosius and his companions were by the general consent of the council readmitted to communion, and allowed to take their place among the rest of the prelates. Several other bishops then presented themselves, and desired to express a similar recantation of their past errors; but their appeal was deferred to the following

sitting. This took place in a few days, and during the six consecutive meetings of the assembly the supremacy of the Roman pontiff, and the worship of images, were set forth, and established as essential portions of the Christian's belief. It was in the last of these sessions that the doctrine which the council had been convened to uphold was defined with that precision, which no longer left it doubtful what was the opinion of the dominant party on the subject. The business of the day was begun by one of the lapsed bishops, Gregory of Neocesarea, who read aloud, and section by section, the dogma established by the council of Constantinople. As each chapter was concluded, the deacon Epiphanius read the passages from the fathers which were considered to embrace a full and direct confutation of the errors it advanced. On arriving at that article in the definition which stated that no other image of Christ was to be acknowledged but that which he had left of himself in the eucharist, the whole assembly expressed its horror in murmurs of execration; and the doctrine of the real presence having been proclaimed, it was triumphantly asked, how there should be an image of Christ in that which was Christ himself?

On the 12th of October the members of the council met to draw up the definition of faith which they had thus developed. The first two articles of the decree were employed to establish the authority of the six general councils, and the creeds they had set forth. In the third, they described in exact terms the peculiar doctrine of their party. "We declare," said they, in this famous document, "that as the figure of the cross is exposed in all other places, so also should there be seen in the churches, on cups and sacred ornaments, on the walls and on tables, in houses and in the streets, formed both in colours and in every other kind of way, the venerable and holy images of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of our pure and sacred Lady the mother of God; of his honoured angels, and of all saints, and men of blessed memory: for, in proportion as these holy objects are

contemplated in images, by so much more actively is the mind excited to remember them ; to desire, to embrace, and adore them. Nevertheless, no approach is to be made in the service rendered them, to that true worship * which is according to faith, and which is alone due to the Divine nature. Know, therefore, that as the oblation of incense and lights is given to the figure of the vivifying cross, to the holy gospels, and to other sacred monuments, so also it ought to be offered unto images, as was the custom among the pious men of old ; for the honour rendered the image passes to that which it represents, and he who adores the image, adores in it the substance, even the person of the being depicted.†

The empress and her son, who had remained at Constantinople, received the tidings of what had passed in the council with the most lively expressions of satisfaction. Irene felt it to be the victory of a cause which materially affected her chance of retaining supreme control in the government of the state. Such an event, therefore, was not to be allowed to pass away without due rejoicings. The assembly had been convened at Nice, lest the untimely interference of the populace might disturb the firmness of its members ; but it had now fulfilled its purpose, and Irene determined that Constantinople should witness the honours of its triumph. In answer to the letter of Tiresias, he was desired to conduct the venerable men who had composed the synod to the capital. The command was obeyed, and the council, which had fulfilled its commission in Bithynia, held its eighth session within the walls of the imperial city. At this assembly the emperor himself, Irene, and the flower of their court attended ; and, seated on sumptuous thrones, seemed to feel the influence of the piety by which they were surrounded. Tiresias having delivered a short address, the sovereign and his mother expressed, in brief

* The Greek word *latreia* here used has a peculiar sense, and is only used to describe the worship due to God.

† Baronius. Basnage. Maimbourg.

speeches, the joy they felt on the occasion. Their sentiments were received with the mingled applause of the clergy and the people; and the definition being read to them, they appended the royal signature in the presence of the whole assembly. New acclamations followed this act; and, on dismissing the bishops to their respective dioceses, the empress enriched them with a variety of costly gifts. In a few days, Constantinople bore signal testimony to the exertions and authority of the council. The squares, the streets, the walls of houses and public buildings, as well as the interior of the churches, were crowded with images or paintings; and those who advocated their worship, wrote of the change which had been effected, as of the restoration of the faith and light of the Gospel, after both had suffered eclipse under the corruptions of the age.

It was almost immediately after this occurrence that Irene commenced that series of machinations which finally involved her in the unnatural guilt, the stain of which, not the most bigotted of historians have attempted to wipe from her memory. The immediate effects of the council were such as she looked for: it put her enemies to silence; and afforded her the means of effectually resisting their opposition to her designs. But the feeling of satisfaction at the termination of the controversy was far from general. A strong party of Iconoclasts still existed; and they were joined by that numerous body of citizens who had, at all times, opposed the attempts of the empress to usurp the sovereign power. With these were united the monks, a class of men whom it might have been supposed the exertions of Irene in support of their favourite dogma would have permanently conciliated. The chief cause of their dissatisfaction was the lenity which had been exercised towards the lapsed bishops. They could not be brought to believe that those who had, only a few months before, employed themselves with impious zeal in the destruction of images, ought to retain their authority over the people whom they had laboured to mislead. While they re-

joiced, therefore, at beholding every quarter of the East adorned with the venerable images they had been taught to worship, they disputed the authority of the council by which they were restored : one of the most zealous of their historians contends, that error was even more encouraged than repressed by its measures ; and that, in reality, it merited not the title of canonical or general.

The opposition of the monks may be accounted for on other grounds besides that of their enmity to the Iconoclastic bishops. Tiresias, the patriarch, though respectable for his piety and talents, had been intruded upon the church by the hand of authority ; and the sentiments of the Roman pontiff on the subject were shared by the most zealous of the ecclesiastical body in every part of Christendom. It was a scandal to see a secretary of state exalted to the primacy of the East ; and a still greater, to find him at once assuming the title of universal bishop. True it was, that he expressed himself towards the pontiff in terms of humility and respect ; but it is also equally plain, that both he and the empress had conceived the idea of pursuing their own schemes as independently of Roman interference as the state of the times would allow. This was one of the objects contemplated in the appeal to a general council. At the head of such an assembly, the primate of the Eastern church reasonably believed that he should have little to fear from the haughty assumptions of his rival : and though he knew that no council could be considered legitimate, at which the representatives of the Roman hierarch were not present, he contented himself with obtaining their co-operation by a mere political device. The pontiff, on the other hand, viewed all the circumstances attending the council with equal suspicion and dislike. He saw exactly how it bore upon the prerogative which it was his object to appropriate ; and though he could not, with safety or consistency, directly oppose an assembly devoted to the establishment of his own principles, he left no indirect means unemployd to lessen its respectability and authority. But

the most zealous image-worshippers were also the most devoted friends of the papacy ; and hence the anomaly exhibited of a triumphant party rejecting the authority by which it was mainly established.

CHAP. XIV.

THE ROMAN PONTIFFS IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY. — INCREASE OF THEIR POWER. — COMMENCEMENT OF THEIR TEMPORAL DOMINION. — PEPIN AND CHARLEMAGNE. — CHARACTER OF THE LATTER. — THE STATE OF THE CONTROVERSY RESPECTING IMAGES. — LEARNED MEN.

WE return to the church in the West. Sergius, who had performed important services for the papacy during his active career, died at the beginning of the eighth century, and was succeeded by John VI. ; in whose pontificate Campania was invaded by the Lombards, under Gisulph, duke of Beneventum. The worst excesses were committed by the barbarians ; but the calamities which the inhabitants of the desolated district suffered were no sooner learnt at Rome, than the pontiff, with that noble benevolence which had characterised many of his predecessors, sent them a sufficient supply from his treasures to repurchase their liberty and safety. He enjoyed his dignity only three years ; and his successor, John VI., is only noted for having been guilty of the weakness of returning the canons of the council in Trullo to the emperor Justinian, without a single alteration.* But what he wanted in firmness or elevation of character, he endeavoured to supply by the munificence with which he expended his wealth in adorning churches, and filling them with the costliest instruments of worship. In his pontificate, moreover, the king of the Lombards restored the lands of which he

A. D.
701.

* Fleury, *Hist. Ecclés.* t. ix. liv. 41. n. 13. Basnage represents the conduct of John as the mere dictate of prudence. He desired, says he, neither to injure his own privileges, nor to provoke his master, liv. vii. c. 9.

had despoiled the church, and the deed which contained the grant was written in letters of gold. Sisinius was the next pontiff; but he died a few days after his election, and left the see to Constantine, a native of Syria, who retained it about seven years. He was summoned by Justinian to the capital of the East; but the object which the emperor had in view is unknown, and the only result of his journey seems to have been the restoration of Felix, the archbishop of Ravenna, to his diocese and honours. That unfortunate prelate had made an effort to recover the independence possessed by the former bishops of his see; but, though aided by the warlike masters of the district, his attempt failed; and the emperor sending a body of troops from Sicily, the walls of Ravenna were beaten down, and Felix, loaded with chains, was carried a prisoner to Constantinople. There he had to endure the punishment inflicted on the basest criminals. His eyes were put out, and he was banished to the inhospitable shores of Pontus: a punishment, it is said, which was regarded at Rome as the infliction of divine justice.

Notwithstanding the want of positive evidence as to the express object of Constantine's journey, it is usually believed to have been occasioned by the emperor's unceasing anxiety to secure the co-operation of the Roman hierarchy in the establishment of the late decrees. It is also argued, and with seeming reason, that his attendance on the imperial commands is a proof of the still unavoidable subjection which the pontiffs had to endure; while his failing to oppose the canons so objectionable to his church, affords a similar proof of his weakness and his fears. Gregory II., by whom he was succeeded, pursued a bolder line of conduct. The part which he took in opposition to Leo the Isaurian, has been already stated; and his determined attack on the Lombards, who made themselves masters of one of the Neapolitan fortresses, indicated the spirit which, in later times, placed Christian prelates at the head of mail-clad armies. Gregory was in all respects the firm

defender and zealous advocate of papal authority. At one moment engaged in open hostilities with the emperor, he was at another employed in directing the labours of missionaries and founding monasteries. Germany, at his direction, was traversed by the ardent and pious Boniface ; and in Italy the rule of St. Benedict became, under his patronage, the universal canon of monastic institutions.

The pontificate of Gregory II. lasted sixteen years, and he was succeeded by a priest of the same name, whom the people elected by some sudden impulse, while engaged in the obsequies of the former. Gregory III. carried the principles which had actuated his predecessor to a far greater extent. Unable to withdraw the emperor Leo, either by persuasion or threats, from the vigorous persecution of the Iconoclasts, he proceeded to the daring measure of excommunicating the sovereign, and then made known to the celebrated Charles Martel his readiness to proclaim him consul of Rome, on condition that he would enable him to support his separation from the dominion of the empire. Leo resented the conduct of the pontiff, by depriving him of part of his revenues, and rejecting his legates. But the step which Gregory had taken, led directly to the establishment of the papacy on the basis of temporal power and grandeur. A new career, new motives to exertion, were opened to the politicians of the church : and it was no longer with rival prelates the bishops of Rome were to contend, but with states and princes. The prizes for which they were henceforth to strive were to be tributary crowns and sceptres — the triumphs they were to celebrate, not those of truth over heresy, but of arbitrary superstition over the free-will, the natural sentiments, and the evangelical knowledge of Christian nations.

Gregory having thus laid the foundation of Roman aristocracy, and commenced, as it is reported, his career by imposing on the Saxon inhabitants of this country a tax to St. Peter, left the authority which he had exercised

with so much energy, to his successor Zachary*, a man fully worthy of the important trust; and combining, with much piety, no inconsiderable share of that political wisdom which was becoming so necessary a qualification to the head of the church. Convinced of the advantages which Rome might derive from intimate union with the rising power of France, he watched, with careful attention, over the interests of the mayors of the palace, the true masters of the sovereign authority; and it was at his suggestion that the nation at length conferred on those powerful functionaries the titles, as well as the privileges, of royalty. The Lombard princes regarded him with corresponding reverence. Luitprand, whose reign lasted above thirty years, was distinguished for his devout observance of the maxims of the church; and the duke of Friuli, who was subsequently raised to the throne, resigned his crown after a reign of five years, and, moved by the eloquent persuasions of Zacharias, passed the remainder of his life in the monastery of Mount Cassino. The charity of this pontiff was equal to his talents. His clergy viewed him in the light of an affectionate father. The poor, the stranger, and the afflicted had their wants regularly supplied out of his treasury. His benevolence freed the victims of mercantile cupidity; and the slaves which Venice offered in barter to the Moors, were purchased by his agents and set free. With the munificence of a prince whose resources seemed inexhaustible, he added to these noble exhibitions of humanity to the distressed, numerous instances of his admiration for tasteful and magnificent buildings. The palace of the Lateran was erected with new and costly splendour from the funds which he supplied. The art of painting was encouraged by the order which he gave to cover the vast hall of the palace with a chart of the world. In the church of St. Peter he placed the numerous books required for the complicated services of the whole year; and, employing his native language for the service of his

* Baronius, *Annal. Eccles. an.* 740.

countrymen, he translated into Greek the dialogues of St. Gregory.

Stephen II. *, who next occupied the pontifical chair, had to endure, from the very commencement of his career, the troubles and dangers of domestic wars. Astolfo, the new king of the Lombards, inherited the spirit of his earliest predecessors, and the age in which he lived prompted him to make the most vigorous efforts for the establishment of his power. It was the period of bold adventure and fierce enterprise. Chivalry had not yet begun to soften the temper and refine the manners of the western warriors, and the influence of the church, though every day increased, was not yet sufficiently acknowledged to command the obedience or satisfy the wishes of ambitious princes. The power, moreover, of the emperor in Italy was in the last stage of decay. Ravenna had acknowledged his exarchs from year to year ; but they were now the mere shadows of an authority which had ceased to be recognised ; and it only required the appearance of a leader like Astolfo to put an end for ever to the rule of the Greeks in Italy. But the Lombard monarch was not contented with the acquisition of Ravenna. He assailed the duchy of Rome and the lands of the church, nor could Stephen, either by the most solemn expostulations, or the offers which he made of money, induce the conqueror to withdraw his troops. In this situation, and when the Lombards had demanded as the price of their safety a tribute which the citizens of Rome felt it would be impossible to pay, the pontiff sent messengers to Constantinople requesting aid of the emperor ; but his entreaties were disregarded, and he was thus left with a terrified and helpless population to meet as they best might the approaching storm. There was a fortitude, a firmness of trust in the compassion and providence of God, in the minds of the men who

* Another ecclesiastic of the same name was elected by the people immediately after the death of Zachary ; but he did not live to enjoy his elevation. On the third morning after his election he was struck with apoplexy, and as he had not been consecrated, he is sometimes omitted in the pontifical calendar. Platina, *Vitæ Pon.* p. 152. Fleury. Baronius appears to say, that the omission of his name is wrong.

lived at this period, which excuses much of that which was erroneous in their ceremonial practice. Stephen took advantage of the season of affliction to inspire the people with deeper feelings of devotion. "I beseech you, my dear children," said he to them, "to implore God's mercy for the heavy load of our manifold offences; he will then himself be our helper, and will deliver us by his all-provident goodness from the hands of our persecutors." Having thus inclined the people to a pious confidence in the mercy of the Almighty, he appointed days of solemn supplication.* In the procession with which the services commenced, he appeared bearing an image of Christ on his shoulders†: the clergy who accompanied him carried the numerous relics and other sacred objects which the people were accustomed to contemplate with greatest awe; and the whole assembly, with naked feet and ashes on their heads, bent their way to the church of the virgin, prayers and lamentations marking their progress as that of a people who contemplated their last hope of deliverance.

A. D.

754.

But Stephen did not remain inactive while thus teaching his flock the great duty of Christians, when bending under the yoke of affliction. His last appeals to the emperor having failed, he turned his eyes towards France, where Pepin, the father of the heroic Charlemagne, was now at the head of a nation as warlike as the Lombards, and as disposed to ally itself with Rome as the invaders were to effect its ruin. A letter desiring help was forthwith despatched to the court of the French monarch, and it was received with the respect which might be looked for from a prince of Pepin's character. Ambassadors were sent to Rome to treat with the Lombards for Stephen's safe passage into France, a negotiation which could scarcely fail in the hands of the powerful sovereign by whom it was undertaken. The pontiff was speedily on his way to the new protector of the

* These solemn services of worship in times of calamity were called Litanies, and were very early introduced into the church. Bingham's Antiquities, book xiii. c. 1.

† This image was called *Aocheircpoeta*, that is, not made with hands.

church, and some miles before he reached the royal residence, he was met first by the celebrated son of Pepin, and then by the monarch himself, the rest of his children, and the most distinguished members of his court. Descending from their horses, Pepin and his attendants prostrated themselves upon the earth, and indicated, by every demonstration of respect, their profound reverence for the exalted stranger. Stephen having delivered a prayer of thanks to the Almighty, the cavalcade proceeded, the pontiff and the whole of the party joining their voices in psalms and anthems till they reached the place of destination, the town of Pontyon in Champagne. There Stephen opened the treasures he had brought as presents for the court; but the following day he appeared with all his attendants, before the monarch, clad in sackcloth and ashes, and, falling at his knees, he implored him, by the mercy of God and the merits of St. Peter and St. Paul, to deliver Rome from the devastation of the Lombards. Pepin in reply promised to grant the pontiff's request, and speedily fulfilled his promise by compelling the enemy to retreat, and shut himself up in the single town of Pavia.* Astolfo, thus pressed,

* Stephen, while in France, was seized with a dangerous illness, and remained for some time at the point of death, in the monastery of St. Denis, near Paris. While in this state, he saw a vision, which he has himself described with all its particulars. "I was praying," says he, "in the subterranean church of that blessed martyr, when I saw before the altar my good lord and shepherd Peter, and the lord Paul, the master of the Gentiles, and I at once recognised them from their surtaria: and at the right of the lord Peter was the thrice blessed lord Dionysius, subtle, and taller, of fair countenance, with white locks, clothed in a colobium of the purest white, spotted with purple, his pallium being all of purple, studded with gold; and they conversed with each other rejoicing. And the good shepherd and lord Peter said, "This, our brother, requires healing;" and the blessed lord Paul said, "Now he shall be healed;" and approaching, he put his hand in a friendly manner on the breast of the lord Dionysius, and looked back on the lord Peter, and the lord Peter said to the lord Dionysius cheerfully, "Thy grace is his grace." And immediately the blessed Dionysius, taking a censer and palm in his hand, came to me with the presbyter and deacon, who were standing apart, and said, "Peace be with thee, brother: fear not; thou shalt not die till thou have returned to thy seat. Arise in health, and dedicate with thanksgiving this altar in honour of God, and of his apostles Peter and Paul, whom thou seest: for there was there an inconceivable brightness and sweetness; and being presently, through the grace of God, made whole, I sought to fulfil that which had been commanded me. But they who were present there said that I was raving. Wherefore I related to them, and to the king and his courtiers, what

agreed to the terms proposed by his conqueror, and the French army was withdrawn. But scarcely had they left the district when he returned to the attack with renewed vigour, laid waste the country round Rome with fire and sword, and at length encamped before the gates of the city itself. The pontiff again sent a strong appeal to his protector: "I conjure you," said he, "by the Lord our God, by his glorious Mother, by all the heavenly virtues, and by St. Peter, who has consecrated you a king, to make the spoiler restore what he has taken, to the church of God. You will have at the day of judgment to give an account of the manner in which you have defended us. It is you whom God has chosen for this great work by his own eternal prescience; for those whom he hath predestined he hath called, and those whom he hath called he hath justified."

It is not very evident in what way the solemn words used by St. Paul, in explaining the doctrine of justification, could be employed to engage the service of a warlike prince; but the increasing pressure of danger prompted the pontiff to use a far greater liberty with sacred language. At the moment when the enemy appeared on the point of completing his designs, Stephen resolved on employing the full privileges of a representative of Saint Peter. Instead, therefore, of writing this time in his own name, he dictated his letter in the name of the apostle, closely imitating his inspired epistles, and speaking in a language which implied that he was possessed of an authority to anoint or dethrone kings, and to perform the offices, not of a messenger, of a teacher sent from God, which is the highest characteristic of an apostle, but of a delegated minister of his power and justice. "Peter, called to be an apostle by Jesus Christ, Son of the living God," is the commencement of this sacrilegious libel on the word of Scripture; and the imitation is kept up with equal closeness throughout. "Peter, called an apostle by Jesus Christ, Son of the

I saw, and how I was cured, and I did according to what had been commanded."—*Baronius, Annal. Eccles. an 754. 4.*

living God, who, reigning with the Father before all ages, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, became incarnate in these last days for our salvation, and being made, hath redeemed us by his precious blood, through the will of the paternal glory, as was foretold by the holy prophets, and by me ;—the catholic and apostolic Roman church of God, the head of all the churches of God, founded on a firm rock by the blood of the Redeemer himself ; and Stephen, the president of that same holy church, may grace, peace, and virtue to deliver that holy church of God, and the Roman people committed to my charge, from the hands of persecutors, be ministered unto you, ye most noble and excellent men, Pepin, Charles, and Carloman, from God our Lord, and also to the most holy bishops, abbots, presbyters, even to all religious monks, and also to dukes, counts, and to all military forces, and the whole people of France : I, Peter, apostle, called by Christ, the Son of the living God, according to the good pleasure of his will, was foreordained by his power to be the illuminator of all the world, our Lord himself confirming it, saying, ‘ Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost :’ and, again, ‘ Receive ye the gift of the Spirit ; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted.’ And concerning his sheep, he says to me, his unworthy servant and called apostle, ‘ Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.’ And again, ‘ Thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven : whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.’ Wherefore let all who have fulfilled my preaching believe that their sins are remitted by the command of God, and that they will enter pure and without spot into eternal life. But for you, in whose very lustrous hearts the illumination of the Holy Spirit hath shone, and hath made you to love the holy and undivided Trinity, truly

in this apostolic Roman church of God, your hope is held annexed to future retribution. Therefore, I, Peter the apostle of God, who regard you as my adopted children, exhort you, and stir up your affections, to defend from the hands of their adversaries the city of Rome, and the people committed to me by God ; and also the house where I rest according to the flesh, from the condemnation of the gentiles ; and to free the church of God, commended to me by divine power, seeing that they are now suffering the most heavy afflictions and oppressions from the reprobate Lombards. Think not otherwise, therefore, dearly beloved, but certainly believe, that as if I were in the flesh before you, I am living to assist you, and that I bind and oblige you, with adjurations, to this declared duty. Because, according to the promise which we have received from that same our Lord God and Redeemer, we esteem you, ye people of the Franks, a chosen nation." The exhortation to all the states of the kingdom is then repeated, and they are again told to believe that the apostle does indeed address them, because, though absent from them in the flesh, he is not spiritually absent ; "for it is written," he adds, "he who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet, receives the reward of a prophet. But," continues the epistle, "our Lady, the mother of God, the ever-virgin Mary, exhorting and adjuring you together with us, commands you with mighty obligations ; in which also unite thrones and dominations, even all the celestial army, the martyrs and confessors of Christ, and all who please God . . . Render, then, to my people of Rome, committed to me by God, and your brothers,—render to them, the Lord working with you, help with all your strength, that in the day of future judgment, rewarding you according to your works, I, Peter, called in this life an apostle of God, may prepare for you in his kingdom most bright and shining tabernacles, promising you the rewards of eternal retribution, and the infinite joys of paradise : only deliver my peculiar people, my people of Rome, your Roman brothers, from the hands of iniquitous Lombards. Run, then, I

entreat you by the living and true God : run ! and be there, before the living Fountain, whence ye are sanctified and regenerated, become dry ; before the spark which still remains of the shining flame from which you have known the light is extinguished ; before your spiritual mother, the holy church of God, in which ye hope to receive eternal life, is humbled, invaded, and by impious hands violated and profaned."

However our feelings, at this day, are shocked by the artifice which Stephen employed to secure the assistance of the French monarch, that prince was moved by it to render the pontiff immediate succour ; and Astolfo was quickly deprived of the fruits of his numerous campaigns. It now became a question to whom the district from which the Lombard was driven ought of right to belong ; and, before this point could be decided, the envoy of the Greek emperor appeared, to claim for his master the restoration of the territory which he had so completely abandoned to its fate. But Pepin was both too politic and too conscious of his power to listen to such demands ; and, sending his chief counsellor, the abbot Fulrade, to perform the investiture, he granted to Stephen, and to his successors for ever, the undivided sovereignty of the conquered territory.

Thus commenced the temporal dominion of the bishops of Rome ; an event which marks a distinct period in the history of the papacy ; but the importance of which we cannot but think has been somewhat over-rated. The power by which the pontiffs acquired their vast empire in the minds of men, owed little or none of its vigour to the influence they possessed as princes ; it went on increasing till it reached the very boundaries of civilisation, while their little seignory remained confined within the narrowest limits : and it declined, and became almost nominal, while their rights as sovereigns continued to be acknowledged by all the states of Europe. In point of wealth, it plainly admits of being questioned whether they could gain any advantage from an acquisition which obliged them to keep an army in their pay ; to

support a countless train of emissaries and envoys ; and to engage in all the expensive arts of diplomacy, with the monarchs of countries whose treasures were perpetually supplied by the labours and the commerce of their people. As little was their new dominion advantageous to their dignity. The pontiff was the first among the spiritual rulers of mankind ; the lowest, almost, of temporal princes : as the head of the church, he was rendered venerable by all the associations, and by many of the highest sanctions, of religion ; as the successor of the exarchs of Ravenna, he was the dependant of every prince who had an army at his command, and was but an item in the catalogue of the petty rulers, who were counted as make-weights in the balance of power. In whatever designs he undertook as the supremely endowed minister of God, he could appeal to the hearts and consciences of men ; could shake the confidence of the mightiest, and bring into alliance the most contrary elements of society to effect his purpose : whatever attempts he had to make in his temporal capacity required to be supported by the pettiest inventions of secret policy ; by contrivances and deceits which, in time, rendered the proceedings of the court of Rome proverbial as examples of cunning and duplicity. But the temporal power of the popes was not only in itself of little value, it had a perpetual tendency to abridge and undermine their spiritual influence. The traffic in which it involved them made their name too familiar to the ears of the busy and ambitious men with whom they had to treat ; and, the broils to which it led often involving them in unsuccessful contests, they gradually became less and less feared by their immediate neighbours and allies. Wrapped up in the mystery of ancient holiness, exercising the power only which had its root in the very early ages of the gospel, and to which the world might have bowed without exciting the fears of princes ; or, if exciting them, exciting them without offering the means to repress the dreaded aggressor ; they might have defied most of those attempts which led to the ruin

of their authority and the dismemberment of their church.

Stephen died, after a short but eventful pontificate A. D.
756. of five years, and was succeeded by his brother Paul, at that time only in deacon's orders. Astolphus, the Lombard monarch, was also dead, and his crown had fallen to Didier duke of Tuscany. But Paul found himself surrounded on his accession with difficulties scarcely less great than those which had disturbed the peace of his late brother. The Greeks still continued to proclaim their pretensions to the sovereignty of Italy; nor dared the Roman pontiff, vain as were their claims, at once throw off the appearance of allegiance. Letters continued to be dated according to the year of the emperor's reign; and it is especially remarked, that the senate and people of Rome, in addressing Pepin, did not call the pontiff by any title signifying his sovereignty, but only their father and their pastor.* The Lombards, on the other hand, showed themselves little inclined to preserve the treaty which had been formed with the church; and Didier, who was greatly indebted for his throne to the help of the late pontiff, now employed all the forces at his command to recover possession of the territory which had been formally conveyed to him and his successors for ever. Paul appealed to his powerful ally, and promised, if he would grant him aid, to do nothing which was not in accordance with his will; a promise which proves both the importance which he attached to the support of Pepin, and the tendency of the newly acquired sovereignty to injure the true power and independence of the rulers of the church.

A tumult, equally dangerous to the state and to the 767. respectability of the pontificate, followed the death of Paul. Totona, a nobleman of wealth and influence, formed the design of elevating his brother Constantine to the vacant chair; and, to effect his purpose, induced the bishop of Præneste to afford him consecration. The

* Fleury, Hist. de l'Eglise, liv. 43. n. 28.

attempt succeeded ; and Constantine kept possession of his usurped authority nearly a year. A strong effort was then made by the great body of the clergy and the people to recover their invaded right of election. The pontiff was seized, and deprived of his eyes. A new pope ascended the throne ; and, a council having been hastily assembled, Constantine had to submit to all the indignities and sufferings which could be inflicted by an insulted and enraged conclave. Stephen III., who had thus succeeded to the government of the church, enjoyed his honours about four years, and then left them to be possessed by Adrian I., a man of piety and talents, ambitious, enthusiastic, and politic. He commenced his career at a period when all these qualities had ample opportunity of display. The Lombards still pressed close upon the boundaries of Rome. Disorder had entered the bosom of the church itself. The effects of faction were visible where should have appeared only the calm dignity of conscious strength ; and the dominion of St. Peter's successors presented the anomalous appearance of a power established on the most sacred of claims, struggling into life, and wrestling with innumerable antagonist principles, like a system which had but just begun to send forth its shoots into the soil in which it was planted. It was at this period, moreover, that the controversy with the Iconoclasts approached its highest degree of virulence ; and Adrian had to employ all the prudence of which he was master to meet the dangers in which it involved him. The measures pursued by the empress Irene were as unfavourable to his views as they were in themselves violent and unjust. But to have opposed them by open and direct means would have obliged him to employ the strength which he required for the support of his interests against nearer enemies ; nor could he easily separate the cause under which the empress shielded her ambition and promoted the independence of the Eastern church, from the designs with which she combined it. The Iconoclasts were as odious to him as to her : they were as opposed to the

system which it was his object to establish, as they were to her usurpations and tyranny. While he expressed his doubts, therefore, as to the propriety of the new patriarch's consecration, and showed considerable backwardness in recognising the second council of Nice, he attempted no vigorous resistance to the invasion of those rules which were violated in her proceedings. The establishment of image-worship promised effects more favourable to his general interests than the assumption of authority by Tiresias and his patroness was offensive to his immediate feelings.

But the church was now to receive the support of a prince whose character and circumstances were equally calculated to mark him for her champion. Charlemagne inherited a throne supported by those firm props of monarchy, a loyal and devoted people, and a zealous clergy. Enlightened beyond most of his contemporaries, he was as prudent in his policy as he was ardent in his enthusiasm. Not contented with a power which might have been supported by mere military force, he employed his treasures and authority to diffuse the advantages of instruction throughout the whole of his dominions. The companions of his leisure were the most learned men of Europe: his mind was continually occupied with the great questions which were then agitating Christendom; and at the head of his armies he never forgot to wage battle in the name of God and for the cause of the Redeemer. Strongly influenced he was by the spirit of the times; and, not less under the power of ambition than other monarchs who have been distinguished for their valour, he, no doubt, often violated the principles by which alone the Author of the Gospel would have its rule established. But he would have been imbued, in a very different degree, by the prevalent dispositions of the age, had he had less wisdom and prudence; and he would have been a warrior of a far different character, had he not been inspired with zeal for Christianity. Whatever were the vices of his nature or conduct, they were subdued and modified by his

attachment to the church ; and the devotion with which he advocated its interests, the warmth of his piety, and his admiration of holiness in others, tended in the most powerful manner to spread abroad that sentiment of religious ardour, which, without being precisely the result to be looked for, or desired, from the cultivation of the gospel, gave a new force to civilisation, a new refinement to its institutions, a new series of sanctions to its laws.

It was to this great man, in the height of his power and glory, that the church, through its then representative, the Roman pontiff, committed its cause and its interests. He had already begun that splendid series of conquests, in the course of which, he made the hardy and obstinate Saxons tributary to his crown ; repressed the insolence of the Huns and the Avars ; and raised a barrier to the progress of the Saracens, who had otherwise planted the banner of the crescent on the walls of every capital in Christendom. The devout feelings which he cherished naturally prompted him to regard with interest the condition of the church, and the position he occupied led him to become its advocate. Some time, therefore, before he had reached the age of thirty, he resolved upon visiting the sacred seat of apostolic authority. In his journey he was accompanied by a numerous body of the most pious and dignified of the Gallic clergy ; and on arriving within about ten leagues of Rome, all the magistrates of the city appeared to do him homage. At the gates of Rome he was met by a vast assemblage of the children whom Christian charity had provided with instruction and protection. They bore in their hands branches of olive, and in the midst of their chanting the king beheld the cross brought forth to hail his arrival as that of the true defender of its doctrines. Deeply moved at the spectacle, Charlemagne descended from his horse, and proceeded on foot to the church of St. Peter, where the pope awaited him ; and as they entered the church, hand in hand, the clergy chanted with a loud voice, ‘Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’

In the ceremonies which then followed, he was observed to take the most devout interest, and, at the particular request of Adrian, he renewed the donation which had been made to the church by his father Pepin and his brother Carloman ; making his attendant nobles solemnly add their assent to the proceeding, and signing the instrument, by which the territory was conveyed, with his own monogram.

The vigorous arm with which Charlemagne attacked the Lombards, who still continued to harass the territory of the church, had at length effectually broken their power, and secured to the pope the steady enjoyment of his sovereign dignities. A bond of union was thus created between the monarch and his ecclesiastical ally, which no common occurrence could loosen, and the two potentates found every day some new reason to cement the friendship. Charlemagne visited Rome a second time, about the year 781 ; and saw his infant sons baptized by the pontiff himself. The young princes were afterwards consecrated : Pepin was named king of Italy ; and Louis, king of Aquitaine. Encouraged by the importance thus ascribed to his sacred authority, Adrian applied to the monarch for his assistance in suppressing the encroachments of the archbishop of Ravenna. But Charlemagne nobly employed the occasion to question the pontiff on the state of his diocese, to charge the Romans with the horrible crime of having sold slaves to the Saracens, and to rebuke the Western bishops in general for their slothfulness and luxury. Adrian denied the truth of the accusations which had been brought against his people and clergy, and successfully pursued the system he had so prosperously begun. When the monarch returned to Rome, about six years after the visit just mentioned, the head of the church was still prepared with his requests ; and when Charlemagne endowed him with the possession of the territory he had just conquered from the duke of Beneventum, he repaid the valuable favour thus bestowed upon himself and his successors, by assuring his patron, that,

if the duke of Bavaria did not fulfil the promises he had made, his people might be put to the sword, and his country laid waste, without any offence against divine law.

The interest which Charlemagne took in the affairs of the church was not confined to the political arrangements which so entirely occupied the mind of the pontiff. During his stay at Rome, a violent dispute took place between the Roman choristers and those who had come out of France. The former defended the chant which they used, by affirming that it was precisely the same as that taught by St. Gregory; while the latter supported theirs, as more beautiful, and better adapted for the purposes of divine worship. It was at length agreed that an appeal should be made to the monarch; and Charlemagne, on hearing the subject explained, demanded which was the more likely to be pure, the fountain or the stream: his choristers replied, the former: "Then return," said he, "to the source—to the chant of St. Gregory, which it is clear you have corrupted." He then requested the pope to let him have some choristers; and, on his return to France, he left one at Mentz and another at Soissons, publishing an order that in every city the teachers of music should submit themselves to the Roman masters of the choir.

To provide, at the same time, for the better instruction of his subjects in the branches of liberal knowledge, he took with him grammarians and teachers of arithmetic from Rome. Aided by them, he established schools in various parts of his dominions; and laid it down as a principle, that, in the various dioceses and monasteries of the kingdom, the clergy ought not to be satisfied with mere regularity of manners, but should labour to acquire and diffuse, as far as lay in their power, the light of science and literature. "For we have often received," said he, "from different monasteries, letters which contained, indeed, many good things, but of which the style was so gross and rude, and so marked with ignorance, that it might reasonably be doubted

whether the writers were capable of understanding the Holy Scriptures. This is why we exhort you to apply yourselves to study; and to choose such persons for your instructors as are best fitted to exercise the office." The letter which contained this exhortation was first sent to the monastery of Fulda, then foremost in the career of improvement: it was thence forwarded to all the metropolitans, with directions to communicate its contents to the several bishops and monasteries in their departments. Nor did Charlemagne stop with providing for the instruction of the better classes in his dominions. He established schools for children in every separate parish, as well as the higher kind of schools in cathedrals and monasteries. To combine the interests of religion with the objects contemplated by these institutions, his attention to the discipline of the church was constant and unwearied. Councils assembled at his summons, to suppress the growing superstitions of the age, and to examine the doctrines of the Gospel by the Gospel itself and the decisions of the most ancient synods. Fearing that the scriptures had suffered from the carelessness and ignorance of transcribers, he had the manuscripts of both the Old and New Testament carefully compared, and the copies employed in the church corrected. Further to improve the state of theology, he directed a collection to be made of the most valuable parts of the fathers; and, to prevent the clergy from fostering the habit of assenting to dogmas into the nature of which they never enquired, he from time to time proposed questions for their consideration; thereby rousing, as it was said by the bishop of Orleans, the prelates to the study of scripture, the clergy in general to the observation of discipline, the monks to regularity, the great to afford good examples and good counsels, the judges to exercise justice, the high to show humility, the low to render obedience, and all ranks and all classes to cherish virtue and concord.*

But the measures in which the firmness and enlight-

* Fleury, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, liv. 44. n. 42.

ened character of this celebrated monarch were most conspicuously displayed, were those which he adopted in the great controversy of the Iconoclasts. He had given decided proofs of his aversion to superstition ; and many of his proceedings were commenced with the direct purpose of freeing the Gallic church from those corruptions which had so manifestly injured the cause of the gospel in various parts of Christendom. Willing, therefore, as he was, to unite with the Roman pontiff in establishing the power of his see, he could not be induced to look with indulgence on either those doctrines or customs which militated in his eyes against the simplicity or truth of religion itself. Hence, the decrees of the council of Nice were no sooner published than he began to employ his combined influence and ability to repress the evil which it seemed calculated to encourage. Not unacquainted with the writings of the primitive fathers ; the ardent student of St. Augustine, and the constant associate of the most learned and acute men of the times, he at once entered into the true nature of the controversy ; saw its bearings and tendencies, and became deeply interested in the discussions to which it led. Greatly to the honour of its clergy, England was the first of the western countries to oppose the Nicene decrees ; and the celebrated Alcuin, it is stated, was deputed by the princes and bishops who assembled on the occasion, to report their sentiments to the French monarch. Adrian, on the other hand, though opposed to the Eastern synod, lost no time in forwarding to his ally an abstract of its decisions ; and Charlemagne, with equal promptness, desired Alcuin and other learned men to examine the document, and the principles on which it was founded. The result of these measures appeared in the publication of the Caroline books against the worship of images, a work ascribed by many distinguished writers to the sovereign himself, but regarded by others as the production of some of the numerous ecclesiastics attendant at his court, and perhaps, of Alcuin himself. But, however uncertain we

may be as to the authorship of this important treatise, the point most material to history is placed beyond doubt. If Charlemagne did not write the work with his own hand, it is certain that it appeared under his immediate sanction, and that it contained an exposition of his views on the subject in dispute.* It may, therefore, be considered as one of the most valuable remains of the theological literature of the eighth century, and as the best medium at present existing for conveying a true notion of the real state of religious opinion at the period when it appeared.

A preface full of important matter is affixed to the work ; and in this introductory treatise it is observed, that “ the church, redeemed with the precious blood of Christ her spouse, washed with the saving water of baptism, fed with the precious blood of the Saviour, and anointed with holy oil, is sometimes assaulted by heretics and infidels, and sometimes vexed by the quarrels of the schismatical and proud ; that she is an ark containing those that are saved, and prefigured by that of Noah ; an ark exposed continually to the storms and the deluge of worldly iniquity, yet never shipwrecked ; an ark beset on all sides by deeps and shallows, and powerful enemies, but always safe under the protecting arm of Christ ; and, therefore, never wandering from the true faith and right confession of the Trinity.” It is next stated, and directly, as by Charlemagne speaking in his own person, that, “ seeing he had taken the reins of his kingdom in his hands, being in the bosom of that church, he was obliged to labour for her defence, and to secure her prosperity : that not only the princes but the bishops of the East, puffed up with sinful pride, had swerved from the holy doctrine and the apostolic tradition, and held very presumptuous and vain synods, to obtain a name with posterity ; that some years before, they had assembled a council in Greece, in which, with gross and hazardous folly, an endeavour was made to abolish the use of images, which the an-

* Dupin, *Bibliot. Pat.* art. Second Council of Nice,

cients had introduced as ornaments, and memorials of things past, and to charge upon images what God had said of idols, whereas it could not be said that all images were idols ; the former being only for ornament and remembrance, while the latter were made to ruin men's souls by a most wicked superstition : that the bishops of this council had blindly anathematised all those who had images in churches, and then boasted that the emperor had freed them from idols : that, besides this, another synod was held, composed of the successors of the members of the former council, who were not less erroneous than the others, though pursuing a course directly the reverse ; that the bishops of this council ordered images to be adored, while those of the former would not allow them to be retained, or seen ; the one party confounding the use and the adoration of images, and the other confounding them with idols." "As for us," continues the sovereign, or the writer in the sovereign's name, "As for us, being content with what we find in the gospels and the apostolic writings, and knowing the works of the fathers, who have not swerved from Him who is the way and the truth, we receive the first five councils, and reject, in the fullest sense, the novelties of the synods lately held. But, forasmuch as the acts of the latter, which are as deficient in expression as they are erroneous in doctrine, have been sent us, we deemed it our duty to write against the errors they contain, in order that, if they should defile the hands of those who hold them, or the ears of those who hear them, the poison might have an antidote in our treatise, supported as it is by the word of God ; and that this weak enemy from the East might be conquered in the West by the sentiments of those holy fathers to whom we have appealed. We have, indeed, undertaken this design with the consent of the bishops of the kingdom which God hath given us, not instigated by ambition, but inspired by zeal for the house of the Lord, and by the love of truth ; since, in proportion as it is holy to pursue good things, it is sinful to consent to evil."

This is the substance of the preface ; and the writer next proceeds to examine in order the acts of the council, and the sentiments with which they are accompanied. In the letter of Constantine and Irene, the expression occurs, “ By him that reigns with us ;” and on this it is observed, that it is gross presumption in princes to compare their reign to that of God ; for, rightly speaking, God alone reigns, princes reigning but secondarily through Him ; even as he alone is immortal and true, and whatever else is so, is so only by communication with Him. Similar remarks are made on other expressions of like tendency, and especially on that address to the pope, “ We beseech your holiness, or rather, that God, who suffers none to perish, beseeches you,” which is properly termed a wretched and execrable style of speaking, manifestly derogatory to the majesty of God. But having broadly declared, that the Roman see possesses supreme power over the churches, as being truly established on the authority of Christ himself, he next examines the passages of the Old Testament cited, in the acts of the council, as proofs of the antiquity of image-worship. This part of the subject extends into the second book, in which he concludes his argument, carefully considering, in a similar manner, the citations from the fathers on the same points. Having remarked, that he did not forbid images, but only the worshipping of them, he answers the assertion made respecting pope Sylvester, who, it was said, caused images of the twelve apostles to be carried to the first Christian emperor. “ This does not prove,” he observes, “ that the pontiff wished them to be worshipped, but only that he desired, by things visible, to raise the monarch’s mind to the consideration of things invisible ;” and that, “ though the acts of Sylvester are acknowledged by many orthodox persons, they are not of sufficient authority to decide disputed questions.” The passages from Athanasius, Augustine, Chrysostom, and other fathers, are then carefully sifted, and proved to be inapplicable to the point : image-worship, therefore, he con-

cludes is unsupported by the example of the apostles, or the practice of the primitive church: to compare them with the ark is considered rash; to liken them to the sacrament of Christ's body and blood is gross impiety. On the anathemas which the synod pronounced against those who refused to worship images, it is observed, that the members of the council thereby declared their fathers heretics; overthrew, in fact, the very authority of the church; and violated, in a high degree, the rule of brotherly charity. "We pray," says the writer, "and give alms, according to the practice of the church, for our fathers; but they anathematise them: we ask rest for them in the sacrifices of the mass; but they pour forth imprecations against them in their councils: we remember them in our prayers; they only name them to condemn them: we implore that they may rest in Abraham's bosom, and they wish them to be damned with heretics." Then, stating the opposite opinions of the two parties, he says, "We do not believe images ought to be abolished, as the one affirms, nor do we allow, with the other, that they ought to be adored. Let us adore God alone, and let us reverence his saints according to the ancient tradition of the church. While, therefore, we tolerate images in the church as ornaments, or memorials of times past, we avoid severity and malice on the one hand, and flattery and sottishness on the other: we are neither too bold nor too weak, and thus show to those who run into extremes the middle path which they ought to pursue in going to Christ."

The third book of this remarkable production contains a full explication of the doctrines received by the church in France. In this confession of faith, the articles on the resurrection and eternal life are accompanied with the remark, that men shall rise with real bodies, and that their happiness or misery shall be in proportion to the greatness of their virtues or their crimes: to the section on baptism, it is added, that children ought to be admitted to that sacrament, and that those who fall

into sin after baptism may be saved by repentance. With respect to the nature of the human soul, it is observed, that all souls are created by God; that they ought to be anathematised who believe them to be a portion of the divine substance; or who assert that they had sinned in heaven before they were sent to inhabit their earthly bodies. Of free will it is said, that men do continually stand in need of God's assistance, and that they are, doubtless, in error, who assert, with Manichæus, that man cannot avoid sin, or, with Jovinian, that man is not capable of sinning.

In a subsequent chapter, Tiresias is accused of having presumptuously forced himself into his sacred office; and in another, he is reprovèd for saying that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father by the Son; whereas it ought to be believed that he proceeds from the Father and the Son: a similar reproof is passed upon the opinion, that the Son hath no principle but the Father; which seems to intimate that the Son is not the principle himself, and that he is posterior to the Father. The subject of images is then again debated: and, in reference to the famous defence of their worship, that the honour paid the representation passes to that which is represented, the writer remarks, that he is unable to apprehend how a cloth and certain colours can have any relation to a saint in heaven, since pictures can never have, like relics, any natural relation to the departed. What is worse, the painter may make people believe, according to his fancy, that his production is a saint, or a false God. Let two pictures, it is said, be presented to a man; let them be perfectly alike, but the one a Virgin Mary, and the other a Venus; then let the painter be asked, which is the image of the Virgin, and which that of Venus. The artist says, this is the Virgin, and immediately it is placed in an elevated position, and crowds rush to honour and salute it; the other painting, in the meanwhile, is rejected with execrations; and yet both were formed by the same hand, both with the same pencil, with the same colours, and both have

the same features: the only difference being in the inscription: why, then, is the one received and the other rejected? not because of the real holiness of the former, but because of the inscription; as if certain letters attached to a painting could give it the holiness which it has not in itself. Other arguments of the same nature then follow, and the treatise is concluded, with an observation on the use of the term universal. "If," says the writer, "it fall out, that the bishops of two or three provinces meet together, and establish some doctrine or rule according to the doctrine and discipline of the primitive church, their acts are catholic, and their council may be called universal; since, though not consisting of prelates from all parts of the world, its decisions are conformable to the faith and tradition of the whole church; but if, on the other hand, they aim at establishing some novelty, then neither can the council nor its acts be termed catholic. In a word, whatsoever is ecclesiastical is catholic, and whatsoever is catholic is universal."

The work, thus completed, was forthwith despatched by Charlemagne's ambassador, Englebert, to the pontiff. Adrian had not been ignorant of the monarch's general sentiments; and his safety and the interests of the church were too evidently dependent on the protection they derived from France to allow of his indulging any free ebullition of zeal in replying to this treatise. Contenting himself, therefore, with attempting an answer to the arguments advanced, he employed the adopted casuistry of the age as the only instrument which might be safely used on the occasion: but it is admitted by general consent that his reply is as weak and illogical as it is cautious. At the conclusion he states, that, as the Council of Nice, had established the worship of images, according to the manner which seemed expedient and lawful, and had rejected the decrees of that false synod which preceded it, he had, therefore, "acknowledged it as legitimate and catholic; but had not yet written an answer to the emperor, lest he should relapse

into the error of his predecessors, which he feared so much the more, since, having written to him respecting the restoration of images, demanding at the same time the restoration of the dioceses and patrimonies pertaining to Rome, he had in vain expected an answer." To this he adds, that if Charlemagne would, therefore, permit him, he would reply to the Greek emperor, by expressing his approval of what he had done respecting images, and at the same time insist on the restoration of the dioceses and patrimonies of the Roman church, which if he refused to grant, he would forthwith pronounce him a heretic.

Neither Charlemagne nor his clergy were influenced by the letter of Adrian, and the Gallic church remained free from the superstition which had obtained a permanent seat in so many other parts of Christendom. In the year 792, a council was held at Ratisbone, to condemn the error of Felix, bishop of Urgel, in Catalonia, who, in reply to a question of Elipandus, bishop of Toledo, had answered, that Christ, as man, was to be looked upon, in relation to God, as an adopted, not as a natural, son. But, two years after, Charlemagne summoned a council to meet at Frankfort, for the united purpose of considering the heresy of Felix, and confirming the resolutions which had been taken respecting images. Near 300 bishops were present on the occasion, and the worship of images was condemned, as a corruption not to be tolerated under any form or qualification whatever.

The general state of the church, the struggles which it had to endure, the evils to which it became every day more and more exposed, may be understood from the preceding details. But it was not by the mere impulse of circumstances that the church was carried forward; nor was it, either at this or at any other period, left without that modifying force in its own bosom, which was to protect it from suffering in its vital principles what it suffered by the temporary depreciation of its active powers. In the writings of the few great men who

flourished at this time, we see the most striking proofs of the conflict going on between the spirit of error and the spirit of truth: the presence of the former is felt, even while the strength of the latter is triumphant: the shadow of the night is discernible amid all the beauty of advancing day. The scriptures were still regarded as the great fountain of truth: Charlemagne believed them to contain the seeds of all knowledge; and writers of every class appealed for the support of their notions to the language and the examples of the Bible: but opinions were taken up which the word of God had not suggested; and the appeal to its authority was made when the mind was too fixed in its determinations to obey the truth. Still further to injure the effect of scripture, the writings of the fathers were often regarded, not simply as a medium for arriving at its just interpretation, but as identical with scripture itself; and, to complete the list of these evils, the philosophy and logic of Aristotle had taken possession of all the avenues of reason, and no thought or opinion was allowed to go forth to the world as legitimate, without the Aristotelian stamp.

In that small number of theologians whose minds were sufficiently strong to operate profitably, notwithstanding the fetters they had to bear, and sufficiently pious to cherish all the essential graces of the gospel, our own countryman, the venerable Bede, holds a conspicuous place. This great man was born in the latter part of the seventh century, and lived to about the year 735. His love of learning and devout disposition were early displayed, and having been placed, at the age of seven years, in the monastery of Weremouth, he was admitted, at nineteen, to the office of a deacon. The only change which he made throughout his peaceful life, was to remove from the monastery in which he spent his boyhood to that of Jerrow, in the same neighbourhood; and in this quiet retreat he remained to the end of his days, wholly occupied in the happy exercise of prayer and meditation, in the deep study of

scripture and the sciences, and in the composition of works adapted to the tastes and necessities of his age. At the beginning of the eighth century, he was sent for to Rome by Pope Sergius ; but it is generally believed that he refused this invitation, as he did also that which is said to have been sent him by Gregory II. His death occurred on Ascension-day, in the year 735, and as he was in the act of concluding his commentary on Saint John's gospel, the last passage of which he completed with his expiring breath. The character given of him by William of Malmsbury shows how eminent a place he was considered to occupy by the most distinguished of our early historians. "He was a man," says that writer, "whom it is more easy to admire than worthily describe ; he was one who, born in an obscure corner of the earth, enlightened its whole circumference by the lustre of his doctrine : art fails, eloquence sinks in the vain attempt, to determine which merits the greater praise, the number of his works, or the excellence of his discourses. Divine wisdom must have inspired him in no scanty measure to have enabled him, in so short a period, to produce so many volumes." *

The works of Bede are divided into three classes ; the first of which is occupied with his Treatises on the Science of Grammar, General Physics, Astronomy, and Chronology. Among these, the most curious is his book on Times, in which, with no little learning and acuteness, he supports the chronology of the Hebrew text against that adopted by the Septuagint. At the conclusion of this treatise, he thus describes the eighth age of the world, and thus speaks of its glory : — "This is that age," says he, "always to be loved, to be desired and sighed for, by the faithful ; that age in which Christ shall lead their souls, clothed in incorruptible bodies, to the perception of the kingdom of heaven, and the contemplation of his majesty ; not taking from them the glory which they enjoyed when first departing into rest and blessedness, but enriching them with

* Cave, Script, Eccles. Hist. Sec. Eiconoclas, t. i. p. 618.

the increased glory of their restored bodies. Of which continual and uninterrupted happiness Moses afforded a type, when he described those first six days in which the world was made, as bounded by the morning and the evening; whereas on the seventh, in which God rested from his works, he makes mention of the morning only, and speaks not of the evening, embracing all things concerning it in the light of eternal rest and blessing; because, as also we have above related, all the six ages of the world, in which the just pursue their good works, the Lord co-operating with them, are so disposed by a supernal ordination, that each of them, having in its course some happy circumstance, is consumed by the not slight darkness of cares and afflictions. But that peace, which souls receive as a reward for their good works in the future world, shall be disturbed by no anxieties, but, when the day of judgment and resurrection shall arrive, shall be fulfilled with a more glorious perfection of happiness. Compared with those times is the most sacred period of our Lord's passion, burial, and resurrection. St. John writes, that Christ, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Judas, offended by the devout attention of the woman who anointed him with ointment, betrayed him to the chief priests. The next morning he entered Jerusalem, sitting on the foal of an ass, and accompanied by a multitude singing praises to God: for five days he was perpetually assailed by their insidious questioning: on the sixth he was crucified; on the seventh he rested in the sepulchre; but on the eighth, that is, on the first day of the week, he rose from the dead: and thus, during the five past ages of the world, the saints never ceased to suffer the snares and hatred of the wicked: but in the sixth, which the Lord condescended to confirm in the faith by his incarnation, to redeem from hell by his sufferings, and, by his resurrection and ascension, to exalt to hope and the peace of the celestial kingdom, the more excellent virtue of martyrs produced more atrocious persecutions from the

hands of the infidels ; but they the more valiantly conquered, knowing that they suffered for him who said to him who before was a robber, but at last a confessor, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." *

The works of Bede are not without indications of originality of thought, for deep piety can scarcely exist without giving birth to new ideas, new expressions and sentiments, the genuine fruit of that being, which, by its power, it has brought out into fresh and better developed existence. But he lived in a day when the mind was beginning to lose confidence in original thought ; when authority, falsely employing the name of the church, prohibited it from traversing the fields of theology with only the lamp of God's scriptures for its guide ; and when the earnest student, consequently, who desired to do good, but to remain safe in his cloistered seclusion, found it far better to compile from the writings of the fathers, than venture on enquiry himself. Hence the voluminous works of the venerable Bede are almost wholly derived from Saint Augustine and other early writers ; and when the reader, delighted with some noble idea, or powerful figure, is ready to express his admiration of the pious Saxon, he discovers immediately after that he is not at the fountain-head of the stream. But he long exercised a salutary influence on the minds of others. His writings are uniformly imbued with those evangelical doctrines which stand most opposed to the pride of the human heart ; and happy would it have been for Christendom, had the piety and learning which existed in a similar degree in other scholars of the age been employed to the same useful purposes.

This country produced other writers in the eighth century ; but, with the exception of the celebrated Alcuin, they evinced little genius, and the only value which their works possess, is that of illustrating the favourite opinions and modes of thought which prevailed when they were written. Egbert, archbishop of York,

* Beda, Opera, t. ii. p. 172—3. Basil. 1563.

and brother to the king of Northumberland, composed a Penitential in four books ; and the letters of Boniface would have made him conspicuous as a writer of this age, had not the attention of historians been more worthily engaged in recording his labours as a missionary.

It is only a few of the productions of either the Greeks or the Latins that redeem the character of this age from the imputation of gross superstition and ignorance. Most of the popes are set down among the authors of the period ; their claim to literary distinction being founded on their numerous letters and episcopal charges. But even where they manifested both inclination and ability to reason on the sound and elevating maxims of divine truth, they were so involved in the mass of trifling questions, of vice, and painful, but unprofitable distinctions, created by the very circumstances of the times, that their correspondence, though valuable as affording a picture of the period, perpetually represents the most distressing evidence that the minds of the most elevated, as well as those of the vulgar, suffered incalculable injury from the prevailing darkness. In the east, learning still made powerful efforts to bear up against the powerful adversaries with which it was on all sides assailed ; but useful as enquiry is to the advancement of knowledge and intellectual power, the feverish excitements and struggles of controversy lead to far different results. In the one instance, it is contented to go forward in proportion to its strength and the gradual enlargement of its means ; in the other, it lays out all at a single venture, and draws upon the resources of craft and invention with equal readiness as on the treasures of true science and legitimate doctrine. Among the writers who most distinguished themselves in the east at this period, was Andreas Cretensis, a native of Damascus ; and in the sermons of this writer we find the minutest points of traditional history treated with the same profound attention as the most important principles of evangelical faith ; but he was far surpassed, both in

powers of mind and in brilliancy of eloquence, by his countryman, St. John Damascene. This celebrated writer was born at Damascus, and was the son of a nobleman of distinction, eminent for his piety and virtues. At an early period, the influence of paternal example was strongly displayed in his character; and, having finished the studies proper to his age and station, under the care of a venerable man, whom his father had saved from the Saracens, he resolved upon relinquishing the pleasures of the world, for a life of retirement and devotion. The monastery of St. Sabas, near Jerusalem, offered him a safe and happy asylum; and there he remained to the conclusion of his days. On entering this retreat, the superior, it is said, put him under the care of one of the most venerable of the fathers, who, having led him into his cell, instructed him, that the first rule of his conduct should be, never to obey the dictates of his self-will. "This," said the devout old man, "is the foundation of piety. Offer unto God your labours and your anxieties; boast not of your knowledge or your talents; behold in yourself only ignorance and feebleness; write to no one; keep silence, and be assured, that there is danger in saying even good things when there is no marked necessity for saying them." These instructions were piously obeyed; and the mind of the young monk lost none of its strength or power of thought from the humility and strict discipline to which it thus became subject.* At the period when the controversy respecting images was at its height, he appeared, armed at all points with zeal and learning, to be the champion of his brethren against the Iconoclasts; and the treatises which he wrote on the occasion, however erroneous in their main argument, breathe many noble and impressive sentiments. "The deep sense," says he, "which I have of my own unworthiness would have kept me perpetually silent, and prevented my engaging in any other business but that of weeping for my sins; but the tempest which shakes the church

* Vita S. Joan. Damas. Opera. Paris. 1719.

compels me to speak, because I fear God more than the emperor." In the body of the discourse he pursues the train of reasoning followed by most other writers on the same side of the question, and concludes with this bold defiance of the temporal power on matters of spiritual concern:—"We will not render obedience to the order of the emperor, which contradicts tradition: to exercise violence, instead of seeking to persuade by reason, is to act the part of a robber, not that of a father: nor is it to princes that the right belongs of deciding on these points, but to councils."

In his second discourse, he remarks, that the same impostor who, in former times, led men into sin, by persuading them to adore even the images of beasts, now deceived them, by insinuating that it was not lawful to honour those objects of sense which called to mind the wondrous works Christ wrought for our salvation, and the conflicts in which the saints had been engaged with Satan. "We should indeed," says he, "commit a grievous sin, if we attempted to form an image of the invisible God; for that which is not corporeal, which is neither visible, nor circumscribed, nor of any figure, cannot be painted. Impiously, moreover, should we act, if we regarded the images of men, formed by us, as gods, or attributed to them divine honours: we do, however, nothing of this kind. But, after God, according to his unspeakable goodness, had assumed flesh *, he was made visible bodily on the earth, and conversed with men; wherefore he received not only our nature and bodily substance, but our figure and colour of flesh; whence we can by no means err in representing his image. We desire, indeed, to see his form: for the apostle says, 'we see through a glass darkly;' and an image is a glass, an enigma, befitting the grossness of our bodies; for however the mind labours, it cannot pass over bodily things. Go to, then, envious devil! Thou enviest our beholding the image of our Lord, by which we increase in sanctity; thou

* Opera, tom. i. p. 331-2.

enviest our viewing his saving agony, our wonder at his humiliation and his miracles, and our glorifying his power; thou enviest the honour which God hath bestowed upon his saints, and our emulation of their manifested faith and fortitude. But we will not obey thee, envious and man-despising demon. Hear, ye people; tribes, tongues, men, and women, and children; old men, young men, and babes,—all who are called Christians!—if any one shall have preached to you otherwise than what the Catholic church hath received until this day from the holy apostles and fathers, and from the councils, hearken not to him; nor admit that guile of the serpent, as Eve admitted it, and from which death entered. Although an angel, or a king, preach to you, close your eyes to all but that which you have received; and only do I refrain from saying, as said the holy apostle, ‘let him be accursed,’ because place is left for repentance.”

In the rapid glance we may now take of the general state of the Christian world at the close of the eighth century, the church in the East is seen sinking under the manifold disorders introduced by the fatal controversy respecting image-worship, by the growing weakness of the empire, the tyranny and corruption of the superior clergy, and the increasing sensuality of the people. The Roman church, on the other hand, appears advancing with rapid strides, to splendour and dominion: humbled at one moment by the incursions of barbarians, it rises again with increased strength; and now, brought into immediate contact with the sovereigns of new states, it avails itself of their ambition, their fears and necessities, to establish its own authority as parallel, but the upper line of the parallel, to theirs. Subordinate to Rome, but still retaining some degree of independence, the other churches of Europe are seen gradually adopting her canons, receiving her agents as their guides, and imbibing her spirit. France, till as late as the year 731, was threatened by the presence of a strong Saracen force, spreading over

the most fertile of her southern provinces. The success of Charles Martel delivered the country from this scourge, and secured a family on the throne in every way adapted to confirm the rising fortunes of the kingdom. But its accession to authority led to the immediate advancement of the papal power ; and the strict league which was soon after formed between its members and the Roman pontiff could not fail of bringing the national church under the domination of that of Italy. The vigour, however, of Charlemagne prevented the consequences of this union from being apparent during his reign ; and the church of France was long preserved from the introduction of those errors which had been made the foster-children of Rome. In Spain, the Saracens had established a magnificent and flourishing state, which defied alike the power of the church and the empire. The Christians who refused to forsake their country, or abjure the hope of salvation, found a refuge in the fastnesses of the Asturian mountains ; and there, surrounded by perils and hardened by difficulties and endurance, they continued to display, from time to time, the opposite virtues of warriors and of saints. On looking at England, we see the introduction of images resisted by the formal resolution of a synod, anxious as the Roman pontiff had shown himself to be for their recognition as objects of worship. But the divided condition of the country, and the contests waged between the rival princes for supreme authority, were highly favourable to the views of Rome ; and this, together with the existence of numerous monasteries, the inmates of which were devoted to her interests, speedily deprived the church of the little independence which it had preserved from spoliation. England, however, was sufficiently favoured with light and intelligence to be able to furnish other countries with teachers. From her went forth the pious and laborious missionaries, who converted the Frisons ; and the zealous and distinguished Winfrid, or, as he was afterwards named, Boniface, who, having become the

apostle of the Germans, was rewarded by the pope with the title and dignity of archbishop of Mentz. The exertions of this celebrated man could only have been supported by the most sincere devotion and the most exalted faith. Fierce in their habits, proud and turbulent, the people whom he taught presented more than ordinary difficulties to the attempt of the missionary ; but he succeeded in bringing vast numbers of them to receive the religion which called for the sacrifice of their gods, and the total change of their dispositions. Dangers and privations could not but attend such an undertaking from first to last ; and, when the arduous work was completed, as far as Almighty Providence saw fit, it was crowned by the blood of the devoted teacher himself, who was murdered, with fifty of his followers, when proceeding to baptise some newly-made converts. The character of Boniface is described as deficient in mildness and humility ; but the nature of the task in which he was employed should be considered before an opinion is drawn prejudicial to his reputation as a Christian missionary. To secure success, the highest degree of energy was demanded, courage the most unflinching, as well as patience and fortitude to endure. But, so long as human character retains any shade of imperfection, qualities of this kind will scarcely ever be found conjoined with that entire and ready meekness of soul which forms the chief feature in minds of another cast ; and though, therefore, Boniface would, without doubt, have merited profound veneration had he been free from the asperity and ambition which seem to have mingled with his nobler dispositions, he ought not to be denied that praise which is due to his signal exertions, because he shared in the infirmities which are common to human nature.*

Ireland, in this century, is said to have enjoyed a

* Dupin says, " The style of his letters is harsh and barbarous, but they display good sense. He was very well acquainted with the rules of church discipline, was wholly devoted to the holy see, and had much sincerity, and an ardent zeal for the reformation of manners, especially of those of the clergy, and for the conversion of infidels."—*Bibliot. Cent.* VIII.

greater degree of light than any other quarter of Europe. Under the general name of Scots, her learned men were to be found in the most celebrated seminaries of education, distinguishing themselves above their contemporaries, not less by their erudition and skill in dialectics, than by the comparative purity of their doctrine. But here, as in every other province of the civilised world, Christianity, the simple, unadulterated truth of scripture, was hazarded on the brink of that vortex of doubt created by the speculations of a bold ingenuity. These very men, who stood so high above the other scholars of the age in point of correctness and simplicity, were themselves chiefly instrumental in bringing into use the subtlest system of verbal logic, which they appear to have applied with fearless empiricism to subjects the most sublime, to questions the farthest removed of any from the reach of technical expressions.

The state of manners and the customs of the church afford no relief to the picture presented by the history of its controversies, and the ambitious struggles of its rulers. Abuses are alluded to in the canons of several councils, which could only have existed in times of the grossest depravity. The clergy are prohibited from indulgences which the most horrible licentiousness could barely tolerate; and the provisions made for the preservation of discipline, for the proper discharge of the ordinary duties of the ministry, prove, beyond the possibility of contradiction, that, whatever light or seeds of holiness might be dispersed among the chosen vessels of Almighty wisdom, the mass of the clergy, as well as the people, had already fallen under the weight of corruptions produced by the united influences of vice, ignorance, and error.

CHAP. XV.

CHARLEMAGNE CROWNED EMPEROR. — HIS LAST DAYS. —
 STATE OF THE PAPACY. — SUCCESSES OF THE SARACENS. —
 LEO IV. — THE PAPESS JOAN. — ADRIAN II. — WARS IN THE
 EAST. — GENERAL COUNCIL. — PHOTIUS.

LEO the Third continued to hold the pontifical dignity till the sixteenth year of the ninth century; near the commencement of which he was on the point of falling a victim to the hired assassins of his rival Adrian. Hurlled from his horse, and savagely mutilated, he was thrown into a dungeon, from which a few bold and devoted friends with difficulty rescued him, completing their dangerous enterprise by assisting him to scale the walls of the city, and hasten to Paderborn, the temporary residence of Charlemagne. His interview with the monarch was a sufficient reward for the hardships he had undergone. The pomp of religious ceremony commemorated his escape. Anthems and thanksgivings resounded from the assembled court; and Charles himself assured the pontiff that his injuries should not go unrevenged. This promise he fulfilled by proceeding to Italy, and instituting a rigid examination of the affair: but the enquiry was no sooner begun, than numerous accusations were sent to him, charging Leo with crimes which seemed to justify the attempts made upon his life or liberty. As no one appeared to support these charges, the pontiff was allowed to rebut them by solemnly asserting his innocence, which he did by taking the gospel in his hands, and exclaiming in the midst of the church, and with a loud voice, — “I have no knowledge of those crimes with which the Romans have charged me!” When he had uttered these words, the bishops and the rest of the clergy chanted a litany, and gave praise to God for the triumph of his servant.

Leo was not ungrateful for the benefit thus rendered him, and on the Christmas day following, while the

A. D.
800.

emperor was kneeling in the most solemn attitude of devotion, before the altar, he appeared bearing in his hands a sumptuous crown, which he placed on the head of the prostrate sovereign, while the multitude, apparently from a sudden impulse of astonishment and awe, loudly exclaiming, — “ To Charles Augustus, crowned by the hand of God, the mighty and pacific emperor of the Romans, be life and victory !” As soon as the voices of the people were somewhat silenced, Leo prostrated himself before the newly proclaimed monarch acknowledging him as his sovereign, and changing the simple name of patrician, by which the shadow of Roman independence had been till now preserved, into the lofty-sounding titles of emperor and Augustus. He then anointed both Charles and his son Pepin with holy oil ; and the whole congregation united, in the impressive ceremonies of the mass, in praying for blessings on the chosen of the Lord.

Charlemagne celebrated his coronation with munificent gifts to the church ; but few of his contemporaries possessed a clearer understanding, were more capable of estimating the true value of things, or were freer from the vanity which can delight itself in show, even to the hazarding of the power which it represents. We may, therefore, believe that he spoke the true sentiments of his mind when he declared that, had he been aware of the pontiff’s intentions, he would have avoided being present in the church on that day. But Leo had several purposes to effect in this matter. He was anxious to evince his power of serving the prince, and was, still more so, to introduce the practice of rites which would for ever after make the temporal sovereign dependent on the spiritual for the confirmation of his authority. Nor was it forgotten, that by thus exalting the western prince to the rank of emperor, the monarchs of Constantinople were deprived even of the semblance of dominion in Italy ; while the pontiff, assuming to himself the right of conferring this dignity, seemed for ever to humble the pride and pretensions of the rival patriarch.

The remaining years of Leo’s pontificate were em-

ployed, like its commencement, in augmenting the privileges and dominion of the church. But towards its conclusion he again felt the effects of the enmity excited against him at the commencement of his career: he, however, escaped as before the blow of the assassin; and succeeded in discovering the originators of the assault. They were some of the principal citizens of Rome; but their rank afforded them no protection. Availing himself of the authority he possessed, and presuming on the mild character of the reigning emperor, Leo judged them as a sovereign, and condemned them to death as traitors against the state. The only notice which the son of Charlemagne took of the affair was gently to remind the pontiff, that such a summary act of vengeance was scarcely to have been looked for from the chief minister of Christ.

It may be easily understood from this circumstance that the effects of Charlemagne's grant to the church were now beginning to show themselves in their true light. The conclusion of that monarch's reign was spent in the most assiduous exertions to establish the interests of religion on a sure and permanent basis. Some time before his death he retired to the town of Aix la Chapelle, and there examined, with a mind as devout as it was active, the principal circumstances which immediately regarded the church of his own country. In the year 811 he put certain questions to the different orders of the clergy, and to which he demanded separate and particular answers. "First," said he "I desire to speak to the bishops and the abbots; and I ask them, why they do not seek to employ themselves in their respective situations? Hitherto they have mingled in the management of temporal affairs; but how can they explain this sentence of the apostle, 'No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life?' They must allow," he continues, "that to neglect the commands and threats of the Almighty, is not to serve him as they ought; that, to decide whether we are Christians we must seriously examine our manners and

conversation ; and that the character of bishops should be specially scrutinised, seeing that the apostle has said, ‘ Be as I am.’” In a second paper of the same kind, he says, “ We desire to know what are the duties of ecclesiastics, in order that we may not demand of them that which it is not lawful for them to grant ; and that they may not require of us that to which we ought not to assent. We pray them to explain what they understand by quitting the world, and taking God for their portion ; and what is the difference between those who renounce the world, and those who live in the world ? Is it fit that they should labour without ceasing to augment their revenues by promises of heaven or threats of hell, whereby the simple and unwitting may be deprived of their possessions ? Is it fit to transfer relics from one place to another, to build new churches, and to exhort the faithful to give their money, under pretence of honouring God and the saints ? Every Christian ought, indeed, to have the vows of baptism continually before his eyes ; but it is incumbent on the clergy to show them the example. Bound, therefore, they are to consider seriously what it is to accomplish or violate these promises ; and what that devil is whom they have renounced, lest they follow him without being aware of what they do. By what canon is it stated that communities may be filled by persons who have no merit to recommend them ? Of what use is he to the church when the superior of a community seeks rather to have many than good subjects, and when he teaches them to sing well, rather than live holily ? Reading and singing ought not to be neglected ; but purity of manners is of infinitely greater importance : it is good that churches be well built and well adorned ; but the ornaments of righteousness are yet more to be esteemed : that which is outward belongs to the old law ; but purity of manners pertains to the new. If Christ and the apostles are our models how many things are there in the church which need reform ! ” *

Having formally resigned his crown to Louis, his

* Fleury, *Hist. Ecclés.* liv. 45. n. 52.

only surviving son, he withdrew more entirely from the cares of public life, and his last days were employed in the correction of manuscripts of the scriptures, in the performance of works of charity, and in prayer. To secure success in the first of these holy occupations, he invited the scholars of Greece and Syria to his assistance : in the second, he exercised his bounty with such munificence, that the Christians of Syria and Egypt, and the remotest parts of Africa, participated in his alms ; while, in respect to the third, neither the growing infirmities of age, nor the habits of royalty prevented him from attending to the earliest and latest services of the church, or from taking a part in their celebration among the humblest of the people.

Historians have been unable to determine, whether the numerous wives which Charlemagne is said to have married ought to be regarded as concubines, or as united to him successively and legitimately. In whichever way the question is determined, it seems to be generally allowed that the circumstance has left a spot upon his character, and that his temperance and wisdom in self-government might have been praised with less dubiousness, had not his passion for women been thus unrestrainedly indulged. But whatever were his faults or his errors, the close of his life was such as became a devout Christian. Penitence and humility characterised whatever he did and said ; and his last words were such as only a well-chastened heart could have uttered : —

A.D.
814.

“ Into thy hands, O Lord ! I commit my spirit.”

Unfortunately, the zeal and anxiety which this great monarch had evinced, in his endeavours to reform the corruptions of the church, were rendered vain by the facility with which he yielded to the ambitious projects of the Roman pontiff. Almost immediately after his death, Leo, we have seen, assumed to himself a degree of authority, which could not be exercised without equal injury to the state and to the sacerdotal character. Stephen IV., his successor, took the oath of allegiance, together with the whole of the people, as soon

as he ascended the pontifical throne ; and announced to the monarch, by his legates, that he would attend him at whatever place he should appoint. But the Christian meekness of the pontiff was exceeded by that of the sovereign, who, on receiving his visit at Rheims, prostrated himself three times at his feet. There is evidence, however, to prove that it still required a man of equally powerful and ambitious mind, to take full advantage of the means of aggrandisement afforded by the present position of the church. During the short reigns of several successive popes, we see the power of the emperor distinctly at work, and his right acknowledged, in the management of ecclesiastical affairs. In the year 824, and under the pontificate of Eugenius II., Louis sent his son Lotharius to Rome, to enquire into the truth of the complaints made by the citizens against their sacerdotal chiefs ; and when Gregory IV. visited France, for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation between Louis and his son, the bishops of France, whom he appears to have threatened with his censures, proudly dared him to a trial of his power, by informing him that, if he did aught against the canons, he should himself be excommunicated or deposed. The pernicious counsel of one of his advisers taught him to answer this intimation by fresh assertions of authority, and he dared to commence the practice, which subsequently proved such a fruitful source of disorder and scandal in Christendom, of declaring the sovereign deposed because of his quarrel with the ruler of the Roman church. The emperor Lotharius was sufficiently tenacious of his authority to issue especial orders, on the election of Sergius II. without his being consulted, that for the future no candidate for the papal throne should be consecrated till he had given his assent to the election.*

A. D.
847. In the midst of these events, the victorious Saracens were pursuing their conquests over the most fertile provinces of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Despising the

* Fleury. Basnage. Spanheim.

pusillanimity of the Greeks, and urged to the experiment by the dissensions of the Latins, they had, in the year 827, made a descent upon Sicily, which, had they not gained it by the treachery of an inhabitant, would have afforded another trophy to their valour and discipline. From the shores of this island they cast an eager glance towards the sunny plains of Italy; and Calabria beheld her principal towns fall, without a hope of relief, into the hands of the dreaded infidel. While this portion of the country was over-run by one division of the Saracens, Rome itself was threatened by another. Africa poured forth her fierce hordes; and the capital of Christendom was to be assailed by the disciples of him who had set himself on an equality with the Redeemer. In vain did the terrified Romans look to the descendants of Charlemagne for help: in vain did they proffer again their broken allegiance to the emperor of the East. Neither the one nor the other was in a condition to render the required assistance, and the city appeared doomed to destruction. The venerable churches of St. Peter and St. Paul, which inspired a feeling of devotion by their antiquity, and of wonder by the magnificence of their shrines, were situated a short distance from the walls: and the unfortunate citizens witnessed from the ramparts the spoliation of these, the most sacred of their temples, without the means of making a single effort for their defence. But the rage produced by this spectacle, combined with the terror with which the entrance of the enemy into the city was contemplated, roused them to attempt some measure of resistance. The death of Sergius just at this juncture, greatly contributed to promote their success. In electing Leo IV. to the vacant office, they provided themselves with a skilful counsellor and an energetic leader. He had scarcely taken the command of the forces when the invader found himself opposed by a new and vigorous spirit, unknown to the antagonists with whom he had hitherto contended. All his attempts to enter the city proved vain; and, after

various assaults, he was obliged to retreat, in order to make the conquest of places less skilfully defended.

Leo was as successful in other acts of his pontificate as in this noble defence of his capital; and, as he added to his skilful conduct in affairs of difficulty, great benevolence and liberality, a piety ready to show itself in the manner best suited to win the admiration of his contemporaries, and powers of mind equal to his activity, he placed the church of which he was the head in a better position to take advantage of the agitations of the period than it had now for some time occupied.

A. D.

855.

The death of Leo was succeeded by much confusion, and in this period of excitement and difficulty, the vacant chair is said to have been ascended by a woman, the celebrated papess Joan. Several historians, not only catholic but protestant, have treated the account of her adventures as wholly unworthy of credit: but to this it has been replied, that, for four or five centuries after the circumstance is said to have taken place, no doubt was expressed on the subject, and that it was only when the infallibility of the popes became a matter of controversy between the catholics and protestants that the truth of the narrative was called in question. According to the common tradition, Joan was born in England, but of German parents. At an early age she became passionately attached to a young student, who in the ardent prosecution of learning formed the resolution of visiting Athens. Unable to bear the thought of separating, the lovers determined upon employing a stratagem, the invention of their united enthusiasm and affection. Assuming the garb of a student, and fearless of danger or privations, Joan travelled by the side of her lover into Greece. There she became as constant a sharer in his studies as she had been in the difficulties of the journey. The profoundest branches of theology and science, the most critical questions of grammar, the various exercises of logic and rhetoric, were not found too difficult for her ardent and capacious mind. But in the midst of these pursuits her lover was carried off by a fever, and she

was left alone and a stranger. Her resolution, however, did not fail her; and she proceeded to Rome, where her extraordinary abilities speedily obtained the attention of the learned. Still retaining her disguise, she opened a school for the teaching of theology and the sciences. To this academy all Rome was attracted by the profoundness of her reasonings, and the exquisite charm of her eloquence. Thus admired, and in times when popular regard had the most important influence on the fortunes of scholars and ecclesiastics, it was not wonderful that she should be invited to accept of offices in which the lustre of her talents might prove of important service to the church. Still less surprising is it that, having once been admitted into the temple of ambition, she should make her way to the altar. The state of the times held out the most flattering promises to the skilful adventurer: too much confusion prevailed to allow of that minute observation of character, that careful weighing of circumstances, which in a more tranquil period might have led to the discovery of something mysterious in the conduct and fortunes of the female rhetorician. It may, therefore, easily be conceived how, step by step, she might rise to stations of dignity and influence; and how, at that particular moment when the people, lamenting the loss of their protector Leo, were filled with apprehensions of approaching ills, she might seize the opportunity of the instant, and place herself on the papal throne. She retained, it is said, possession of her seat for near two years and a half, when an accident, the consequence, it appears, of some new attachment, put an end to her career. Engaged in the celebration of one of those gorgeous festivals which had their origin in this age, she was passing, in the midst of her train, by the church of the Lateran, when, seized with the pains of labour, she was obliged to retreat under the walls of the Coliseum. There the evidence of her sex and of her guilt became manifest to the scandalised multitude; but she was saved by the agonies of death from hearing their execrations; and her name and history were in a com-

paratively short period so sedulously involved in doubt, as to render her existence itself problematical.*

Benedict III. is the pontiff who, according to the received chronology of the Roman church, succeeded Leo IV.; and the principal argument employed against the veracity of the above tradition is the difficulty of reconciling the dates of the papal history, if Benedict did not succeed Leo till after a space of two years and a half. But however this may be, the commencement of his pontificate was disturbed by the machinations of a priest named Anastasius, who, attaining the assistance of the imperial deputies, entered the palace, and compelled him, with blows, to seek a place of safety. The people, of whom he was the favourite, delivered him from this danger, and during the two years and a half that he occupied the papal chair, his piety and devout attention to the customs of the church secured him a continuance of popularity. Pilgrimages had been now long growing into vogue, as the surest and most acceptable mode of showing obedience to Heaven and reverence for the church. In very early ages, a journey to Jerusalem was regarded as an undoubted indication of piety; and it is probable that for some time it continued to be so, and to be productive even of very beneficial effects upon both the mind and the heart. But it is easy to see that a

* The learned Spanheim has written a long dissertation on the history of the papes Joan, and contends, with great warmth, and an abundant display of acuteness and erudition, for its veracity. (Opera, 1701, p. 1363.) In this he shows that Anastasius himself, the librarian, who lived in the ninth century, mentions her in his lives of the pontiffs, but that the Jesuits, in the editions they printed, repressed the account. Other authors are named, who also successively allude to her history; and John Huss and the Council of Constance mention it as a received fact. To this it is added, that a statue near the Coliseum, and another at Bologna bore testimony to the same fact. In its answer to these arguments, the church of Rome observes, that the Greek writers in the period of their greatest hostility make no allusion to this story; that Hincmar, who sent legates to Rome, remarks, that they heard of the death of Leo on the road, and found Benedict seated on the papal throne by the time they arrived there. As he wrote at the period to which he alludes, and as his ambassadors could not have been two years and a half on the way, this is regarded as a strong evidence of the falsity of the history altogether. To this it is added, that, without disturbing the whole chronology of the pontiffs, they cannot find a space for these two years and a half; but Spanheim answers this argument by bringing forward numerous errors in the Roman calendar. See Basange also; and Bayle, art. *Papesse*

journey to Rome had none of those grand and affecting associations to tempt the pilgrim into leaving his home and the ordinary duties of life ; and that, when undertaken by princes, it could lead to nothing but an increase of blind, superstitious regard for the externals of religion. Ethelwolf, king of England, afforded a memorable example of this in the present age. During his stay at Rome, he confirmed the grant of the tribute called Peter pence ; and conferred on St. Peter and St. Paul one hundred marks each, for the purpose of furnishing candles at their altars ; and the same sum on the pope as an alms. To St. Peter also he made an offering of a massy crown of gold ; and an example was thus set to future princes to seek the favour and praises of the Roman pontiff by grants, which could not fail of increasing the burdens of their subjects at home.

Nicholas, the successor of Benedict, rendered himself conspicuous by the fierceness with which he contended for the dominion of the bishops above the temporal power. "Obey the king as supreme," is an apostolic maxim, and it had hitherto been generally interpreted according to the obvious meaning of the words ; but Nicholas contended that it was applicable only to such kings as were superior to the rest of mankind by their virtues ; an explication, it has been justly observed, which proves that he had utterly forgotten that, when these words were written, the world was governed by the emperor Nero. In this lofty opinion of the privileges of the church, he was confirmed by the homage rendered him by the reigning emperor, Louis, the son of Lothaire, who walked publicly before him on foot, holding the bridle of his horse. He was still more strongly encouraged in the same sentiments by the unfeigned and substantial respect which his charity, and the prudence of his counsels won from the people. So much was he esteemed on account of the wisdom which he displayed on occasions of difficulty, that persons are said to have come from the most distant parts to take advantage of

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853.

his discourse, and profit by the example of his measures.*

In the pontificate of Adrian II., the ambition of the preceding pope was succeeded by a bolder display of the passion. The new potentate, after having, in some degree, justly exercised the authority with which he was invested, by excommunicating the duke of Spoleto, who had besieged Rome, and given it up to the violence of his soldiers, considered himself equally empowered to employ his authority in matters of a more judicial nature. When the emperor, therefore, sentenced an offending bishop to pay the penalty of his guilt, Adrian immediately started a claim to the exclusive privilege of judging any members of the episcopal order who might be accused of offending against the laws. As the emperor did not seem inclined to allow his title to this right, he expressed himself indignant at the want of respect which was thereby shown to his pretensions ; but his anger only brought upon him the severe, and somewhat sarcastic reproof of the monarch, who, in addressing him on the subject, observed :—" Your letters are to this purpose: ' We desire, and we order, by apostolic authority, that Hincmar of Laon appear before us at Rome.' We are anxious to know where the author of this letter discovered that a king, whose duty it is to correct the wicked and punish crimes, ought to send a culprit to Rome, who has been already judged according to the laws. We are king of France ; nor have we till now been regarded in the light of the mere lieutenants of the bishops : they are kings whom God hath set up to rule upon the earth, and who have given permission to the bishops to manage affairs according to their ordinances. Your predecessors never wrote to our predecessors in the manner in which you have addressed us."

The firmness of the emperor appears to have had the effect of subduing the haughty dispositions of Adrian ; but it did not prevent his successor, John VIII., from employing all the arms of papal despotism with deter-

* Fleury. Basnage. Platina.

mined perseverance. His career, however, was suddenly arrested by the appearance of Lambert, duke of Spoleto, who, having pillaged the city, cast him into a dungeon, where he nearly perished of hunger. For almost a month, the public worship remained unperformed; those who attempted to enter the churches were driven away by the infuriated soldiers; and when, on the retreat of the duke, John was liberated from confinement, he found it necessary to dismiss the numerous pilgrims who had resorted to the city for the purposes of devotion. He himself hastened to the emperor, and obtained permission from him to assemble a council at Troyes; but its results were little satisfactory to his pride; and the part which he took in respect to Photius, the patriarch of Constantinople, permanently injured him with the most powerful division of the church.

In the history of the popes who in rapid succession governed the Roman church, to the termination of this century, little is to be found of importance to the general illustration of our narrative. They were mostly engaged in petty disputes, or in defending the contradictory courses which they pursued in regard to the then all-important question respecting the Eastern patriarch. But towards the close of the century a circumstance occurred which throws considerable light on the character of the period. Formosus had been elevated to the papacy, from the bishopric of Porto, and he was succeeded, after a reign of four years and a half, by Boniface VI., who lived to enjoy his dignity only fifteen days. The pontifical throne was then ascended by Stephen VI., who perpetrated the horrible offence against reason and charity to which we have alluded. Under the pretence of punishing Formosus for having forsaken his diocese of Porto, contrary to the canons, he ordered him to be disinterred, and the lifeless body to be clothed in all the vestments and rich insignia of the pontifical order. Thus decked, the corpse was carried into the assembly convened for the object of trying the supposed culprit; and, a doctor of laws having been

appointed as the advocate of the accused, the process was formally commenced. The pontiff, in the course of the trial, addressed the corpse with questions and reproaches, as if insensible of the absurdity of the proceedings ; and, after the disgusting scene had been kept up for a certain time, solemnly declared it guilty of the offences in question. On the announcement of the sentence, the lifeless body was stripped of the pompous garments with which it had been adorned ; three of its fingers were cut off ; then the head was dissevered from the trunk ; and, in the end, the mutilated remains were cast into the Tiber.*

Such was the state of things at Rome, while the East presented the appearance of a sea vexed by continual storms, and even in its calmest state perpetually throwing up, with fearful heavings, the melancholy evidences of former tempests. The Saracens were now established over that whole extent of country, which the emperors of Constantinople might, with a moderate exercise of good government, have for centuries called their own. But it was not by the mere extent of their conquests that the disciples of Mahomet continued to render themselves formidable to the princes of Christendom. A spirit of enquiry, the ambition to reach the highest standard of civilisation, had arisen among them ; and, following the example of Almamon, the successor of Aaroun al Raschid, their sovereigns were become munificent patrons of learning and philosophy. Enthusiastic in whatever they undertook, the Arabians penetrated with equal boldness and patience into the depths of intellectual mysteries ; but, happily for themselves and for Europe in a subsequent age, their thoughts were directed to the sciences ; and algebra, arithmetic, and astronomy were not less cultivated among them than the study of the Koran or the abstruse niceties of logic. But the refinement which followed this attachment to philosophy did not diminish their warlike vigour or fierce-

* Spanheim, *Opera*, p. 1362., who observes, that all the writers of the life of Stephen, with one obscure exception, relate this circumstance.

ness. The desire of conquest, the love of renown, the thirst for excitement, yield not, in a people, to the influences of refinement, or even luxury, till the means of enjoyment are accumulated into too great a stock, or are placed too near to require exertion and enterprise. The first taste, indeed, of pleasure is that which, next to want itself, urges man on to the greatest efforts which either his bodily or mental faculties enable him to make. And it was in this state of excitement that the Mussulman chiefs now beheld their followers; and had it not been for the jealousies and divisions which existed among them, and which may be ascribed to the mercy of Providence, no power, humanly considered, could have resisted their continued attacks.

It was under the emperor Theophilus that the armies of Eastern Christendom were pitched, in the fullest array of their strength, against these formidable foes. Irene, at the beginning of the century, was sole mistress of the sovereign power; but she sunk beneath the superior cunning of her chief minister, Nicephorus, who chose, on the death of the patriarch, Tarasius, a layman of his own name, but infinitely his superior in character, to occupy the vacant dignity. Both Plato and Studites, however, the most eminent saints of their age and country, strongly opposed the election of Nicephorus, on the grounds of his being a layman; and mutual opposition, jealousies, and persecutions were the result of their enmity. The emperor, in the meanwhile, who had rendered himself not less hateful by his protection of heresy than contemptible by his avarice, was engaged in a dangerous war with the Bulgarians, which terminated in his defeat and death. His successor, Michael, shared nearly the same fate, but lived to bury the chagrin of his ill success in a monastery. The next emperor, Leo, a native of Armenia, having carefully fortified Constantinople, awaited the approach of the enemy, secure of protecting the city against his attacks, and trusting, by some act of treachery, to draw the Bulgarian general into his power. But though suc-

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cessful as to the former of these measures, he was fearfully deceived in the results of the latter. The barbarian chief got tidings of the snare laid for his destruction, and on withdrawing his troops from the walls of the city, he laid waste the whole neighbouring district with fire and sword, carrying the inhabitants captive into his own country ; and among them a large body of the clergy, who were, shortly after their arrival there, subjected to the most grievous tortures that Pagan barbarity could invent.

The calamities which thus afflicted the empire were sufficient, it might have been supposed, to still the angry passion for controversy ; but, shortly after the event above related, the dispute respecting the worship of images was revived, with all the force of its original virulence. Leo, instigated by the most unworthy counsellors, had too ready a recourse to violence for the settlement of a question which reason and scripture only were the proper witnesses to decide. The greater number of his clergy were strongly in favour of the image-worship, which had now long prevailed, and their remonstrances prove both their sincerity and their courage. At their head stood the patriarch himself, who exhorted them, without ceasing, to persevere in the defence of those objects so dear and venerable to the churches. " Trouble not the church," said Theodore Studites to the emperor : " the apostle has told us that God has made some apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers ; but he has not spoken of emperors. You are charged with the command of the state and the army ; attend to them ; and leave the affairs of the church to pastors and theologians." To this and other similar addresses, Leo replied by commanding the remonstrants to appear no more in his presence. This order was followed by another, which prohibited their leaving their houses, or holding any conference with each other, not only on the subject in dispute, but on any other relating to theology. A command such as this it would have been the grossest pu-

sillanimity to obey ; and it was treated by those to whom it was sent with noble contempt.

But it is plain, from what followed, that neither the minds of the people, nor those of the clergy, were so devoted to the Iconolatres as might be conjectured from the foregoing recital. In the councils which Leo summoned in order to give authority to his proceedings, there was a considerable number of bishops, who were confessedly aided by the clamours of the multitude in their favour. Had the attempt to put away images been the result of Leo's own determination, this would not have been the case ; and distressing and unjustifiable as were the persecutions which followed, there were, no doubt, keen and subtle men behind the scenes, as well as some few others of a better nature, to urge the emperor into violent measures. But the effects of their resistance proved, beyond a doubt, the sincerity of those who contended for the worship of the images ; and the memorable saying of the bishop of Nice describes, we fear, too well, the general impressions which royalty makes upon the minds of men even on matters of the most solemn interest. " How can you desire us," says he, " to hold a conference with the Iconoclasts ? Know you not, that even the Manichæans would succeed against us, if they knew you were on their side."

Wounds and imprisonment were the consequence of resistance to the council which he held. The cathedral of Saint Sophia witnessed the most wretched outrages on the persons of the clergy ; and the prisons were crowded with the unfortunate victims of those united evils—despotism and intolerance. Among the sufferers were Theodore Studites, Nicetas, Macarius Thaumaturgus, and Theophanes, the most celebrated members of the persecuted party. But in the midst of their sufferings, one of those events so common at that time in the empire freed them from their persecutor. Michael, the captain of a band, known by the name of the confederates, had ventured to upbraid the tyrant for his relentless cruelty ; for this he was seized, and cast

A. D.
820.

into prison ; and it being Christmas Eve when he was apprehended, Leo determined that the day of the Nativity itself should behold his execution. Horror-struck at the idea of such a profanation of the sacred festival, the empress besought him to defer his intentions till the following day. With great reluctance he yielded to her entreaties ; but while ordering the fetters for his prisoner, of which he himself kept the key, he is said to have exclaimed, “ You and your children will see the consequence of persuading me to defer this execution.” His apprehensions were not without foundation. Michael, under pretence of sending for a confessor, made it known to his associates, that unless means were found to rescue him, he would disclose their secret proceedings. The attempt was made, and prospered. Clad in the garments of priests about to perform the holy offices of the midnight, the conspirators obtained an entrance into the palace : the service had already begun when they reached the door of the chapel, and the emperor’s voice, a moment after, was heard rising loud above the chorus of worshippers. In an instant their swords were brandished amid the terrified assembly : Leo, covered with a cap like that worn by the clergy, was with difficulty recognised ; but his death, when discovered, was the work of a moment ; and Michael, taken from his dungeon, immediately seated himself, heavily chained as he was, on the imperial throne.*

Michael, the Stammerer, as he was called, from the imperfection of his speech, had no qualities to recommend him to the affections or respect of his subjects. Ignorant of every species of learning, violent in his temper, and strongly imbued with the worst errors of Manichæism, he subjected many of the most venerable of the clergy to heavy and degrading punishments. Among these sufferers was the pious and learned Methodius, who, having borne on his feeble frame 700 lashes of the scourge, was condemned to confinement in the same loathsome dun-

* Chronographia, 457.

geon with an abandoned criminal. Euthymius, the bishop of Sardis, died of the blows he received ; and other less conspicuous members of the church perished in secret, under the cruel tortures inflicted by the tyrant's orders. But the persecutions of a fierce uneducated monarch like Michael, however productive of individual suffering, seldom shake the party or the system against which they are directed. A much more serious impression is usually made by the systematic proceedings of better-instructed and more refined despots, like his son and successor, Theophilus. However erroneous were the doctrines of the Iconolatres, it is impossible to justify either the violence or the arts which that monarch employed to suppress the obnoxious worship. Without forgetting to punish the chiefs of the sect with bodily tortures, he imposed ruinous exactions on all who ventured to express their accustomed reverence for the images ; and while the unfortunate victims of his cruelty were groaning under their wounds, their feelings were still more deeply outraged by seeing the paintings and images which decorated the churches, hurled down and burnt, to make room for representations expressive of ridicule and contempt. Two brothers, one of them Saint Theodore of Jerusalem, the other Theophanes, also distinguished by the title of Saint, bore their sufferings with sufficient magnanimity to paint the tyrant in his true colours.* Extended on the ground, they were exposed, during the whole day, to a torture as novel as it was agonising. Theophilus had heard that one of them was a poet ; and believing them both guilty of treason, he resolved to describe their character in twelve verses, which he directed to be inscribed on their faces with hot pincers. This operation was performed with minute care ; but when the sufferers arose, they exclaimed,—“ Know that this writing will open to us the gates of heaven, and that it will be shown to you in the presence of Jesus Christ ; for never was a like barbarity before committed : you have discovered, indeed, the

A. D.
829.

* Baronius. Annal. Eccles. 833. n. 1.

secret of making men regret the reign of the ancient persecutors.*

The resolution and sufferings of Methodius were equally remarkable. It was a circumstance characteristic of these times, that many ecclesiastics, who had been consigned to exile, or a dungeon, apparently for life, were suddenly sent for again, to undergo a renewal of their tortures, and expire under the tardy hand of the executioner. Methodius had now been so long immured in the tomb which formed his prison, that his hair had fallen from his head, and his skin was become like parchment drawn over the bones of a skeleton. Allowed at length to come forth again into the world, he refused, it is said, to take up his abode in any of the monasteries, because not one could be found that was free from heresy : he continued, however, to hold intercourse with those who had suffered for the same cause as himself ; and many are reported to have been cured of their errors by the gentle but powerful persuasions with which he appealed to their feelings. But he was not permitted to enjoy his liberty long. Theophilus, having ordered him into his presence, demanded, "How is it that, after what you have suffered, you will not cease to create disputes respecting so trifling a thing as images ?" — "How is it," rejoined Methodius, "if images be so little worthy of attention, that you take so much pains to multiply images of yourself ?" Enraged at this reply, the infuriated monarch instantly ordered him to be stripped, and punished with 600 lashes ; having received which, the unshrinking confessor was carried down into one of the cells of the palace, bleeding from all the pores of his body.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that this same Methodius should, after enduring such persecutions at the hand of Theophilus, become an inmate in the palace, and be received by that sovereign as a teacher capable of ex-

* *Chronographia*. Leo Grammaticus. This continuator of Theophanes relates the previous fortunes of Theophilus and his brother, and mentions that the former was employed by the emperor as tutor to his sons. Spanheim regards them both as traitors.

pounding many salutary truths. But it is not impossible that the events which had lately occurred to humble the pride of Theophilus, might also tend to soften the asperity of his feelings against the Iconolatres, and that Methodius, seeing more of his character, might evince a greater readiness to act with caution and forbearance.

It was at this period, that the whole strength of the empire was weighed in the balance with the force of the Saracens. In the year 838, Theophilus, having made a general levy of his troops, marched into Syria and, after various successes, sat down before the city of Sozopetra. This was the point, to reach which he had led his army across the burning wastes of the country, and where he felt impelled to make one bold and desperate stroke to wound the feelings, as well as humble the pride, of his great enemy, the caliph Motassem. Sozopetra was the birthplace of the Saracen warrior ; and, cherishing sentiments which are not often found in the breasts of princes, he regarded the spot with filial veneration. So strongly was this feeling implanted in his mind, that he did not refuse to stoop to ask Theophilus to spare it : but the emperor scornfully mocked at the prayer ; the town was levelled to the ground, and its unfortunate inhabitants murdered, or led captive to Constantinople. Revenge immediately inspired the heart of the Saracen to destroy Amorion, as dear to the emperor, because the birthplace of his father, as Sozopetra had been to him. The treasures or the blood to be expended in this enterprise entered not into the calculations of Motassem ; and, at the head of an armament greater than Syria had yet beheld, every man bearing the name of Amorion engraved on his shield, he approached the fated city. In vain did the counsellors of Theophilus persuade him to remove the inhabitants to a place of safety. Rendered confident by his former victory, he resolved to defend the town to the last ; and in this he was confirmed by the bravery and strength of the governor. But nothing could withstand the fury of the Saracen soldiers ; and, after a siege of thirty days, which cost

the conqueror 70,000 men, Amorion appeared doomed to destruction. It was now the emperor's turn to appeal to the clemency of the victor: but the age of chivalry had not yet commenced; no feelings yet existed in the minds of warriors, which could lead to those demonstrations of manly generosity, which, in a subsequent age, threw such a dazzling lustre over the field of strife. The imperial messengers were rejected with the utmost contempt; and Amorion lay levelled under the arm of Motassem.

The captives, who were carried to Bagdad, experienced, during seven years' confinement, the worst miseries which an untiring revenge could inflict; while the conflict, thus furiously commenced, was carried on from time to time, according to the varying strength and opportunities of the rival powers. But the Mussulman empire was every day more and more weakened by the internal dissensions which prevailed among its princes. The Turks, a tribe full of new and untried vigour, were now beginning to manifest their strength; and while in Spain and Italy the Saracens appeared in the height of their glory, at Bagdad, the chief seat of their power, all was doubt and confusion.

Theophilus was succeeded by his infant son, Michael; the government remaining, during his minority, in the hands of the empress Theodora and ministers appointed by the late sovereign.* The worshippers of images had ample reason to rejoice at this arrangement. Theodora herself was strongly attached to their party; and Methodius, after all his sufferings, ascended the patriarchal throne. But Michael, on reaching the age of manhood, proved himself a monster of vice and impiety; and he easily allowed his uncle, Bardas, a man equally abandoned to licentiousness, but of great ability, to take upon himself the direction of the state. One of the first acts of this prince was to remove the patriarch Ignatius, who had succeeded Methodius in the see, and appoint in his room

* Continuators of Theophilus. *Chronographia*. Fleury, and Baronius. *Annal. Eccles.*

the celebrated Photius, whom he hoped to find more tolerant of his conduct.

The church and empire were both long agitated by the disputes which had their origin in this appointment. Ignatius firmly refused to sign the abdication of his dignity; and, after suffering every species of torture and insult, was exiled, first to the island of Lesbos, and then to that of Terebinthus. By an act of falsehood and cunning, Photius endeavoured to obtain the assent of pope Nicholas to his election: but in this he only partially succeeded; and he was obliged to have recourse to a council, chiefly composed of prelates devoted to his interests and to the will of Bardas. The deposed patriarch was summoned to attend this assembly; and, after the formality of a trial, the vestments which denoted his dignity were forcibly stripped from his person. He was then thrown into the tomb of Constantine Copronymus, where he was subjected again to the most cruel treatment, and at last obliged to put a cross to a paper, which was afterwards filled up by Photius, with a formula of resignation.* Still worse sufferings were threatened him; but, disguising himself as a slave, he succeeded in making his way to the lonely islands of the Propontis. There he remained secure till the conscience-stricken emperor and his minister, terrified at an earthquake which nearly shook the capital from its foundations, allowed him to return. Bardas was soon after put to death by his imperial master and relative, and Michael himself fell beneath the swords of his own guards.

Basil the Macedonian had succeeded Bardas, as the chief minister of government, and had at first so well pleased the emperor, that he obtained the honour of coronation. But Michael found that he was as stern in his morals as he was resolute in his management of affairs; and he accordingly formed a plot, which, in its results, proved fatal to himself instead of his associate.

* *Chronographia*. Baronius. Fleury. This is the most suspicious circumstance in the history of Methodius. If he did put the cross, it was plainly an act of resignation.

The new emperor immediately reinstated Ignatius in the patriarchal seat. In the mean time, pope Nicholas, having made himself acquainted with the affair, had assembled a council, in which Photius was solemnly deposed ; and in his letters to Michael and his ministers he expressed his determination never to hold communion with one who had so usurped an office to which he had not the remotest claim. A greater schism than had ever yet occurred would, probably, have been produced by the mutual recriminations of the pontiff and Photius ; but the former died, and the latter was deposed, before those fatal effects appeared, which might have been looked for from their dispute. Ignatius addressed the new pope, Adrian, in the most flattering terms ; admitted, without restriction, the primacy of Rome ; and declared that its authority could afford the only remedy for the numerous evils which afflicted the church. The messengers who conveyed this letter, carried one also from the emperor Basil, which was accompanied by a book, said to be the work of Photius, and the purport of which was, to set forth the policy and condition of the Roman court under the blackest colours. This volume was examined in a synod assembled for the purpose, and the names of thirty bishops were appended to the sentence which directed it to be burned.

A. D.
869. Both Adrian and the patriarch regarded the assembling of a general council as the sole means of reestablishing order, after so long a period of dissention and licentiousness. For this purpose the pontiff sent three legates to Constantinople, and the council was appointed to meet on the 5th day of October. Only eighteen persons were present at the first session *, but they were sufficient to confirm the legality of its proceedings ; and at the next, Photius himself was compelled to appear at their tribunal : but he persevered in observing a strict silence, only once or twice opening his mouth to express,

* Baronius. The number would scarcely have been so small had Photius been as base as his enemies represent.

in the words of Scripture, that he stood before his judges like Jesus Christ before the high priests and Pontius Pilate. In the seventh session he was again present ; and in the eighth, his writings were burnt before him, in a brasen vessel full of fire, brought into the midst of the assembly for that purpose. The ninth session did not take place till three months after this, and was chiefly remarkable for the confessions which it elicited from the courtiers of Michael, of their offences and their fears. “ Alas ! ” they exclaimed, “ what could we do ? Our consciences convinced us of guilt, but we had our fortunes and our families to establish by obedience.” On the last day of the council, the emperor was present, with his son and a large body of the principal members of the court, three ambassadors from the king of France, those of the king of Bulgaria, and not less than a hundred bishops. Of the twenty-seven canons which embraced the decisions of the assembly, the greater part referred only to the affair of Photius ; and the history of its proceedings is, perhaps, less interesting than that of any other of the general councils. On the deposed patriarch himself it made no impression, if credit can be given to his words. “ This council,” said he, in a letter to one of his friends, “ is but the villany of barbarians. The martyrs stood surrounded by soldiers, who with naked swords threatened every moment to destroy them. For more than six hours they had to remain in this position, suffering the most cruel insults. It was, indeed, like a theatrical representation, in which prodigies are shown, and letters read, full of barbarisms and blasphemies. The spectacle ended without presenting the slightest sign of either reasonable action, or reasonable opinion ; bacchanalian shouts giving us cause to believe that we were in a meeting of madmen. Although this proceeding, so impious and unheard of, surpasses all those of the Jews which the sun has seen, or the moon hidden ; although it surpasses the insolence of the pagans, the fury and stupidity of the barbarians ; you ought not to evince sur

prise, nor express the least murmur against the providence of God, by whom it is permitted." Again he says,—“ Let us not refuse to be anathematised by those who despise the commandments of the Lord ; in order that, notwithstanding our offences, we may be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. When anathemas were hurled against the impious only, there was reason to fear and avoid them ; but now that the audacity of sinners tempts them to condemn the defenders of the true faith, showing thereby their contempt of all law, both human and divine, and converting ecclesiastical ordinances into the instruments of blind fury, this punishment, once so terrible, and the greatest of all, is but the play of children. It is, indeed, to be desired by the good ; for it is not the enemies of truth that can render punishments, particularly those of the church, terrible, but the conscience of those who suffer. Innocence despises their punishments, which will confer crowns and immortal glory on those whom they think to abase. This is why the righteous would a thousand times rather be outraged and anathematised by those who are separate from Jesus Christ, than be made partakers of their impious discourse by their applause and flattery.” *

If Photius was as guilty of offences against truth and holiness, as he is represented to have been by a large class of writers, these assertions of innocence could only have proceeded from a mind in which all the evil influences of the age must have wrought with more than common virulence. But it is probable that he was guilty of no greater crimes than those which ordinarily follow in the train of ambition, and are nourished by the vices of a court ; and these crimes appear as nothing in a mind strongly impressed with a sense of injury. By the natural sophistry of the human heart, calamities unjustly suffered are reckoned as a sufficient atonement for all sins, of which an example can be found in the current events of the world. Photius,

* Fleury, *Hist. Ecclés.* l. 52. n. 51. Basnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise.* The latter historian writes with particular candour on the affair of Photius.

therefore, might have written as he did, had the guilt laid to his charge been much more evident than the history of the times makes it appear : he might have asserted his innocence against those who accused him of unwonted wickedness, with a very sincere belief in the truth of his defence ; and when, on reviewing the acts of his pontificate, he found that the greatest offences with which he was charged, were the measures which he took to secure his dignity, and the opposition which he offered to the Roman pontiff, he might easily persuade himself, that, if he had overstepped the law of human charity in the one instance, and employed unfair arts in the other, the object of his exertions was finally good. But the accusations against him were evidently the result, in a great degree, of the most furious party hate ; and we ought, were there no other reason but this, to admit, with the utmost caution, the broad expressions by which he is denounced as the basest of hypocrites.

By one of those extraordinary efforts which only men of his character can make, he succeeded, after an exile of eight years, in reinstating himself at court. Shrewdly supposing that a monarch like Basil, who had ascended the imperial throne poor and an adventurer, could not be insensible to the attractions of such a prize, he resolved, it is said, to put him in possession of a name and a genealogy equal to those of the noblest sovereigns in Christendom. For this purpose, he fabricated a manuscript in the old Alexandrian character, and written on parchment of the most ancient date. In this manuscript were contained a genealogy of the families descended from Tiridates, king of Armenia, and a history of the actions for which they were severally famous. Basil was represented as sprung in a direct line from the ancient monarch ; and his deeds were set forth in the form of a prophecy, as outshining the most glorious acts of his renowned ancestors. The work, when completed, was inclosed in the covers of an ancient volume, and sent to Theophanes, the emperor's secretary, and a faithful ally of the deposed patriarch. By this person it was pre-

sented to Basil, whose curiosity was inflamed by the remark, that it was the most recondite volume in his library ; that there was only one man in the empire who could interpret it, and that that one was Photius.

The monarch lost all consideration of the past disputes in his anxiety to learn the contents of the mysterious manuscript. Photius was ordered immediately to Constantinople ; and in the conferences which arose from the interpretation of the genealogies, he employed his eloquence and cultivated manners with so much success, that Basil became as strongly prejudiced in his favour as he had before been against him. Ignatius was now of a great age ; and his death occurred just as Photius had reached the highest degree of popularity both with the emperor and his court. The patriarchal seat was, therefore, again free for him, and he was once more placed on that eminence for which he had suffered so much, and created so destructive a contest. But misfortune had not taught him mercy or forbearance. His enemies fell a speedy sacrifice to the revenge which he cherished ; and his conduct appears to have been, in all respects, that of an ambitious courtier, with more power than courtiers ordinarily possess.*

John, who was then seated on the pontifical throne, purchased the hope of protection against the Saracens, by acknowledging the right of Photius to his newly recovered dignity ; and in the council which the patriarch assembled in 879, his legates were among the first to do him homage with the extravagant language of adulation. But neither the pontiff nor Photius derived the advantage they had looked for from this union. The former was disappointed in his expectation of loyal attachment and generous assistance from his new allies ; and the latter soon after beheld another legate at Constantinople, who was continually employed in efforts to dethrone him. At the accession of Leo, the son of Basil,

* His readiness to flatter the emperor was shown by his putting the young prince Constantine, who died about this time, in the catalogue of saints, and dedicating churches to his memory.

Photius felt the full effects of papal hostility. The new emperor disliked and feared him ; and he was once more deprived of his honours, and sent an exile into Armenia, where he is supposed to have died.

Under the prudent government of Leo, a reform was attempted both in the church and in the administration of the laws. In these efforts the emperor was warmly aided by his brother Stephen, whom he placed on the patriarchal throne immediately after the deposition of Photius ; and the general prospect of affairs was every where brightening. But the mass was too deeply corrupted, and of too great extent, to be moved or renewed by individual exertions ; and the virtues, or the wisdom, which a century before might have retarded the downfall of the state, now only shed a momentary ray over the darkness, which, the instant after, was felt by the minds of men to be denser and more irresistible than ever. Stephen died in the year 893, and was succeeded by Antony, who passed an obscure reign of two years, and then left his dignity to be possessed by Nicholas, whose career extended into the following century, as did the reign also of the emperor Leo.

CHAP. XVI.

STATE OF THE CHURCH AT THIS PERIOD. — CONTROVERSY RESPECTING THE REAL PRESENCE. — PACHASIUS. — DISPUTES ON THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE AND ELECTION. — GOTTERCHALCHUS. — THE PAULICIANS. — LEARNED MEN. — CLOSE OF THE CENTURY.

THE troubles which agitated the church and empire at this period, arose from two distinct sources, the political ambition of ecclesiastics, and the desire of speculative men to re-awaken the controversies of former times. But as the combatants on points of doctrine were the same as the aspirants after power and wealth, these two sources of disorder poured their streams into the same channel, and the church thus became flooded with the impure waters of human passion. Happily for the interests of truth, the Almighty Guardian of our faith did not leave himself without witnesses fitted for the age in which they lived. Among the disputants whose whole aim was the display of their ingenuity, or the establishment of some dogma precious to their party or to some powerful dignitary, there here and there appeared men full of spiritual desires, and devoutly given to the simple promotion of the Gospel of Christ. Were we to decide respecting the number of these faithful servants of God, by that of those who obtained the title of saint in these days, the catalogue would be almost as long as the most cheerful view of the progress of Christianity could lead us to expect. But this multiplying of titles was one of the signs of the corruption of the church. The name of saint was at first the highest and noblest designation of the peculiar people of God. Simple in its signification, it described with beauty and sublimity the wonders which the Gospel had wrought on human nature ; and they who bore it felt, in the meekness of their hearts, that the grace of God only, working mightily within them, could have given any intelligible meaning to such a term ap-

plied to men. But this sacred title was now conferred with profane liberality; and to have contended or suffered with the dominant party, was allowed to be a sufficient claim to the distinction. It also merits observation, that many of those whose names are handed down to us with the most profuse eulogies, are men who, whatever might be their virtues or their piety, appear evidently to have acted repeatedly from those impulses of passion which Christ and his Scriptures represent as widest distant from the temper of regenerated minds.

It was in this age that that controversy arose, which, of all others, perhaps, affords the best test for proving the declining state of spiritual religion. In the early times of the church, it was the great characteristic of Christians, not only that they walked by faith, not by sight, but that the whole series of their devotions and exercises separated them from things corporeal, to make them in spirit one with Christ. The first corruptions which prevailed in the church operated directly against this principle: the first worldly minds that pretended to faith, busied themselves about its modification. At the beginning, it was only the void, the nakedness, of the spiritual temple itself, which startled the too ready converts; and this cause of complaint was not removed, till the ministers of its altar began to forget, that it was not to make men in good humour with the Gospel, but to bring them into subjection to its truths, that they preached and prayed. Then they clothed their doctrines in a new diction; then ceremonies were introduced as helps, and ornaments as symbols; and the principle being once admitted that, to make men believe, they must see, it wholly depended, in future, on the wild or indulgent fancies of churchmen to decide how and when the souls of believers might be left to seek God by internal communion.

The sacrament of the Eucharist retained, for the first three centuries, the simplicity of its divine origin. To perform an act which not only recalled to mind the most solemn mystery of heavenly love, but united, ac-

according to a promised blessing, the worshipper with his Redeemer, was the object which brought the disciples of Christ together, when they first celebrated the last supper. That no honour was paid the mere outward and material symbols ; that no idea entered the minds of believers, of the substantial presence of that body which had been crucified, raised from the grave, and carried up into heaven ; appears evident from the silence of the apostolic fathers respecting such an opinion ; the absence of any allusion to it in the writings of Jews and Heathens, who would, doubtlessly, have reckoned it among the subjects worthy of their contemptuous scoffs ; and, especially, from the simple manner in which the sacrament was celebrated and partaken of, which could scarcely have been the case, had the communicants believed that they were assembling around the body of their Lord, who had given a power to his ministers greater than any he had promised them by his words, — even the power of transforming the elements of bread and wine, by their consecration, into his true flesh and blood. But though, to the healthy spiritual apprehension of the early Christians, the mystery of Christ's presence might be declared in the strong terms of evangelical metaphor, yet leave to faith its proper consecrating power ; there was, it must be confessed, a tendency, in many of the expressions employed by the fathers, so to fix the mind on the immediate presence of the Lord's body, as to make room for the errors which were subsequently introduced. The simple words of Christ cannot be mistaken, except by the grossest understandings, or by those bent on unwarrantable refinements ; but when they are paraphrased and illustrated, when they are made to convey the images which they create in the mere human intellect, notions are easily appended to their interpretation, which have no connection with their original and simple meaning. Our limits will not permit us to enter into such a detailed view of this subject ; but it would not be difficult to show, that as the pomps and ceremonies of

the church increased, and the pure light of truth was confounded with the inventions of men, the views of Christians respecting the eucharist became more and more uncertain, and were every age verging nearer to that darkness in which error became legitimatised. Many expressions in the writings, both controversial and didactic, of the theologians of the two or three preceding centuries, mark the progress of corruption on this point; and though most of them, perhaps, admit of being explained away, ~~sc~~as to avoid the necessity of admitting them as proofs of the doctrine of transubstantiation, they amount to a strong degree of evidence, that the present age had only to make a single step, as well as those which preceded it, to produce the changes and commotions which we have now to describe.

Several authors have been cited by the writers on this controversy, who, it is plain, remained free from the error in question, long after its general diffusion. Such were Theodulphus, bishop of Orleans; Abyton, bishop of Bâle; and Charlemagne himself, whose great object appears to have been to preserve to Christianity its pure and spiritual character. But a theologian appeared about the middle of the present century, who had the boldness and perseverance to decide at once for those opinions, which had been secretly insinuating themselves into the system of popular belief. This was Paschasius Radbert, a native of France, and born about the year 786. Of a restless disposition, but acute and active, he gradually raised himself to the dignity of an abbot, and took a part in the principal proceedings of the day. It is not precisely known at what time he published the work in which he unfolds his doctrine respecting the real presence; but it speedily attracted the notice of a numerous class of persons, who, ready to embrace any explication of a mystery which they could not understand, were ready to plunge with the new interpreter into the depths of his theory. Supporting his opinions by the most fearless assertions of their im-

portance, he declared that the reception of them was essential to salvation ; that they formed an inseparable branch of faith ; that whatever the apostles had done or written tended but to prove the doctrine they developed ; and that the most signal miracles had been wrought to establish the fact, that Christ was corporeally hidden in the bread and wine. A copy of the book in which these tenets were set forth was presented, after a revision of several years, to Charles the Bald ; and the consideration of the subject then became a matter of general interest. It is too much to suppose, that the clergy could at this early period of the controversy see the advantages which would accrue to them, in point of power and profit, from the establishment of the new doctrine ; but they instinctively discovered, that it must necessarily increase their dignity in the eyes of the multitude, to have it believed that they could reproduce that body, of which only the mantle that clothed it could cure the most inveterate diseases. Nor can it be supposed, that they would very scrupulously enquire into the foundation of an opinion which accorded so closely with their general system of teaching. They had already brought almost every species of outward object into spiritual employment ; had already contended, that there was a real sanctity in the mere wood and stone which had been carved into images ; and it was plain, that the fair establishment of the doctrine of Paschasius would furnish a full confirmation of this whole class of inventions. But the state of parties was such at the present period that few dare openly express themselves on the question. The popes were placed in a position which at all times prohibited their making an experiment on points of doctrine without a clear prospect of success ; and the most influential supporter of Paschasius, Hincmar de Laon, was too deeply involved in the conduct of another controversy to allow of his appearing openly as a champion in this. Several anonymous authors, on the other hand, put forth treatises exposing the error of the new

doctrine ; and at length Bertramn, or Ratramn, a priest and monk of the monastery of Corbey, appeared on the field, ready to combat Paschasius on the subject of his opinions in all their extent and bearings. In this undertaking he was soon after joined by Johannes Scotus Erigena, a man of powerful intellect, and endowed with all the qualities which give vigour to a disputant. Thus upheld, the controversy soon spread through the principal divisions of Christendom, and religion received another deep and rankling wound from the shafts, poisoned with hate and presumption, which the combatants hurled against each other.

The controversy respecting the real presence was but one of the results of the state of opinion at this period. An examination of the doctrines of grace was again commenced ; and the whole series of articles established by Augustine had to be submitted to the test of new enquirers. The originator of this dispute was Gotteschalchus, a native of Germany, and a monk of the monastery of Orbais, in the diocese of Soissons. At the age of forty he was ordained priest by the suffragan bishop of Rheims, and soon after left his monastery to visit Rome. He then went into Dalmatia and Pannonia, where he performed the labours of a zealous missionary, and taught those doctrines for which he was soon to suffer a long and cruel persecution. On his return, he entered a monastery in Lombardy, and his opinions were forthwith made known to Notingus, bishop of Vienna, who informed Rabanus, archbishop of Mentz, of their tendency, as he would have acquainted him with the discovery of a new heresy. Rabanus was one of the most celebrated scholars of the day ; and he manifested no unwillingness to enter upon the examination of the doctrines in question. The immediate result of his labours was a treatise, which he addressed to Notingus, and count Eberard, the founder of the religious house in which Gotteschalchus had taken up his abode while in Lombardy. In this work he sets forth, in broad language, that the doctrine of the new teacher

was, that those who are predestinated to life cannot be damned, and that those who are predestinated to damnation cannot be saved. With great wisdom, he devoted the main force of his argument to the second division of the subject, and, entrenching himself within the strong holds afforded for such an argument by the manifested justice and mercy of God, he declared, that the true scriptural doctrine of predestination is this: that men, having incurred the penalty of sin by the fall of their first parent, can only be delivered by the grace and merits of Christ; who was predestined from everlasting to suffer for their sins: that those who have obtained a remission of the penalty of original sin through baptism, are, if they sin, condemned for that sin, as the act of their own free will; but through the foresight of it are predestinated to that condemnation; which notion is established on the distinction drawn between the Almighty's predestinating any thing according to his own independent will, and his being said to predestinate it simply because he foresees it. There are, however, so many intimations in Scripture of God's determining certain mighty consequences of creation and redemption, and it is so contrary to all our ideas of his power and wisdom, to suppose that he has not a fixed method, and known instruments, for securing those conclusions to his plan, that a reasoner so close and learned as Rabanus could hardly fail of acknowledging that he saw these traces of the doctrine of predestination in the economy of salvation. But rightly rejecting the awful idea of reprobation, of one pre-ordained misery of a large portion of human beings, he stated that God does not predestine evil, but foresees it only, while all that is good he both foresees and predestines.

To this attack of Rabanus, Gotteschalchus replied in a treatise, in which, arranging his arguments under three heads, he speaks, first, of the predestination of the wicked; secondly, of the will and death of Christ, and his readiness to save all men, even infidels; and, thirdly, of free-will. But he was contending with a party which

could at any moment call in the aid of another power besides that of reason or Scripture. Scarcely had his book been sent forth, when he was summoned before a council assembled at Mentz, for the purpose of examining his opinions. In the confession of faith which he there made, many points of his doctrine were found to agree with those of Rabanus ; but the mode in which he stated his belief in the predestination of the reprobate, declaring that they are condemned to torment, in the same manner in which the elect are saved, that is, by the mere will of God, without any regard to their actions or dispositions, was heard with horror ; and his opinions being condemned by the meeting, he was sent to Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, in whose diocese the monastery was situated in which he had been brought up. The letter which Rabanus addressed to the archbishop is characteristic both of himself and of the times. “ Ye know,” says he, “ that a certain vagabond monk, named Gotteschalchus, who says he was ordained priest in your diocese, being come from Italy to Mentz, is found to teach a wicked and pernicious doctrine concerning predestination, maintaining that as there is a predestination of God for the good, so there is also for the evil ; and that there are many persons in the world who cannot turn from their errors or escape from sin, because of this divine predestination, which constrains them to suffer that death to which they are doomed, as in their nature incorrigible and worthy of damnation. This man, he having maintained the doctrines here stated at the council of Mentz, and refusing to correct them, we have thought fit, after having condemned him, to send to you, according to the order and advice of our most pious king Louis, in order that you may keep him within your diocese, which he has left, contrary to the canons. Suffer him not any longer to publish his errors, and seduce the people ; for I perceive he hath already led away many, who are become less careful of their salvation, since he hath put this opinion into their minds, prompting them thereby to

ask, 'Why should I labour for my salvation? If I am predestined to damnation, I cannot escape; and if I am predestined to salvation, no sins that I commit shall prevent my attaining it.' Thus have I, in few words, shown you his doctrine, which you may fully learn from his own mouth, and then proceed against him as you see fitting." * Hincmar was not less celebrated for his influence and talents as a courtier, than was Rabanus for his learning. Brought up in the monastery of St. Denys, he was received at the court of Louis the Debonnaire soon after completing his studies, and there laid the foundation of that political skill, which in process of time secured him so elevated a position. During the troubles which prevailed in the nation, he remained faithful to the deposed monarch; and for this was rewarded, at his restoration, with many marks of favour, and, at length, by an appointment to the archbishopric of Rheims. When the controversy commenced of which we are speaking, he had been many years settled in this diocese, and was looked upon as the chief of the Gallic church. Whether from a desire to strengthen his authority by exercising it, or from a real dislike to the doctrine of Gotteschalchus, he took up the affair with all the zeal which Rabanus wished to inspire: the innovator was summoned before an assembly of the bishops at Quincy; and there, after having already passed a private examination before the archbishop himself, had to undergo the interrogatories of men strongly prejudiced against him by the declared opinion of their chief. The termination of the trial was such as might be expected. He was deposed from the priesthood, condemned to be beaten with rods, according to the canons of the council of Agatha and the constitutions of Benedict, and to be imprisoned, in conformity with the decision of the German synod. This sentence was conveyed in the following words:—
 "Brother Gotteschalchus, know that thou art deprived of the sacred office of priesthood, which if you have ever

* Dupin. cent. ix. vol. vii. p. 11. London, 1695.

received you have managed contrary to all rules, and profaned, even to the present time, by thy manners, disorderly actions, and corrupt doctrines : wherefore, by the judgment of the Holy Spirit, of whose grace the priesthood is a special gift, and by the virtue of the body and blood of Christ, thou art utterly forbidden for the future to officiate in any of its offices. Moreover, because thou hast intermeddled with ecclesiastical and civil affairs, contrary to the profession and duty of a monk, and in contempt of the ecclesiastical laws, we do, by virtue of our episcopal authority, order and command that, according to the rules of the church, thou be severely scourged, and afterwards shut up in a close prison ; and that thou may never teach again, to infect others, we enjoin you perpetual silence in the name of the eternal Word." *

The sentence being passed, a copy of the book was put into his hands, in which he had written the texts of Scripture, on which were founded the main doctrines of his system ; the scourge was then prepared ; and, in the presence of the emperor and the bishops, he was beaten till the agony of his frame obliged him to drop the volume into the fire near which he was placed for that purpose. In prison he wrote two confessions of his faith, but they only provoked rejoinders, which increased the enmity against him ; and as he was found gradually sinking under the effects of his confinement, strong efforts were made to induce him to recant : they produced, however, no impression on his mind ; and as Hincmar ordered that, if he continued in this state, the consolations of religious communion and Christian burial should be refused him, he was treated in his last moments as one too vile to be allowed the common offices of charity.

Gotteschalchus was, it would seem, greatly misrepresented by his enemies ; but it is plain that he carried

* Fleury, *Hist. Ecclés.* 48. n. 49. Dupin. The former writer remarks, that little surprise can be felt at the cruelty of Hincmar towards Gotteschalchus, when he is known to have put out the eyes of his own nephew.

the doctrine of predestination to a length for which there is no warranty in Scripture. Those, on the other hand, who were engaged by Hincmar to write down his opinions, were perpetually verging towards pelagianism : this soon became evident to several distinguished men of the age ; and Prudentius of Troyes and others, among which the most conspicuous was Ratramn, speedily appeared on the field to advocate the Augustine doctrines of grace. Hincmar, finding himself thus assailed, lost no time in calling fresh forces to his aid. Both Rabanus and Lupus, abbot of Ferrara, obeyed his wishes : but the latter earnestly exhorted him to stop the controversy ; and neither of them appears to have attempted to deny that qualified doctrine of predestination, which, as the contest proceeded, appeared sacrificed to the unscriptural tenets of the semi-pelagians. In the letter which Lupus dictated to Hincmar, he approached the doctrine of Gotteschalchus himself, as to all its practical applications ; it being of little consequence, in reality, to those who perish, whether they are doomed to eternal misery by a pronounced curse, or left to the certain endurance of it by the irresistible current of their fate. “ The truest opinion,” says he, “ is, that predestination, in regard to the elect, is a preparative grace, and in respect to the wicked, is a withdrawing of the same grace : that all men are born in a state of damnation, and that God takes such out of that state as he pleaseth by his mercy, but leaves others in it by his justice. So that it is true, that God predestines those whom he hardens, not by impelling them to sin, but by not keeping them from it : that predestination, therefore, does not necessitate either good or evil, because both have a freedom of will, which excludes a fatal necessity : that the elect, who receive from God the power to will and do, do freely perform all that conduceth to salvation ; and the reprobate, who are forsaken by God, do voluntarily commit, and not against their wills, those actions which deserve eternal punishment : that no man can be so absurd as to say that there is a necessity where the will hath a

command, although it be assisted by the grace of God, or left by his just judgment.”* This exposition of doctrine was badly received by both parties ; the one asserting that it was opposed to the proper view of God’s mercy and goodness, the other that it interfered with the justice and unchangeableness of his decrees. Ratramn, the monk of Corbey, begins his treatise by an appeal to the statements of the fathers, and thence gathers, as a general summary of belief, that all that is done in this world is done by the order and direction of God’s providence: that although he is not the cause of the crimes and sins of wicked men, yet they are subject to the rule of providence, and serve for the execution of his will : that the Almighty hath foreseen from all eternity what shall befall the good and the evil, the elect and the reprobate: that the predestination of the saints is the effect of his mercy ; and that the number of the elect can be neither increased, nor diminished, nor altered: that all the holy thoughts and good actions of the saints, by which they obtain happiness, are the mere result of the grace of God, which alone can help us to do good: that this grace operates in us to will and to do; and that it is essential to the beginnings both of faith and prayer. This forms the substance of the first part of the treatise: in the second, he examines the doctrine of reprobation; and argues, from the writings of Augustine, Fulgentius, and others, that God hath not predestined sinners to sin, but to eternal torments as the punishment of their sins: that they reason falsely who say that eternal punishment was ordained and appointed for sinners, but that they were not predestined to it: that this predestination did not impose the necessity of sinning on any man ; though those who are elected by the mere mercy of God shall infallibly be saved ; and those whom God leaves shall be infallibly damned for the sins they have voluntarily committed ; all good being attributable to God as its sole author, and all evil to our own

* Dupin, vol. vii. p. 14.

corrupt hearts, because he never inclines us to evil, but only leaves us to the motions of our depraved will.*

Both the above works were written by order of Charles the Bald, who submitted them to the examination of Hincmar and Pardulus. These personages put them into the hands of Amalarius, deacon of Treves, and Johannes Erigena Scotus, whose skill and subtilty in logic have been already mentioned. The production of the former has been lost; but that of Erigena remains to astonish us at the acuteness with which he argued, and to warn us against entering on the discussion of that which regards our hopes and our salvation with the mere instruments of human ingenuity. He begins with stating, "that every question may be resolved by four general rules of philosophy; namely, division, definition, demonstration, and analysis." The chief points of his argument are, "that man is absolutely free after the sin of Adam; and that, although he cannot do good without the grace of Jesus Christ, yet he doth it, without being constrained to it, or forced by the will of God, by his own free choice; and that sin and the consequences of it, that is to say, the punishments which it receives, being mere privations, are neither foreseen nor predestined by God: that predestination hath no place but in those things which God hath pre-ordered for eternal happines, and may be supposed to arise from the foresight of the good use of our free-will." In proving the dogma, that eternal punishments are mere privations, he says, "that the torments of the damned are only privations of happiness, or the afflictions which arise from being denied it: that there is no other fire prepared for them, but the fourth element, through which the bodies of all men must pass, but that the bodies of the elect are changed into an eternal nature, and are not subject to the power of fire; whereas, on the contrary, the bodies of the wicked are changed into air, and suffer torments by the fire, because of their contrary qualities; for which reason it is that the demons

* Dupin, vol. vii. p. 74.

who had a body of an eternal nature were massed with a body of air, that they may feel the fire.” Johannes was answered by Prudentius bishop of Troyes, and also by Florus, deacon of the church of Lyons. The latter of these writers, after stating the doctrine of the necessity of divine grace, observes, “Man can of himself neither will nor do aright, but, according to those words of the apostle, ‘it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure,’ must depend on the Almighty for whatever he thinks, or wills, or desires, or performs aright. He, therefore, who denies God to be the sovereign and all-efficacious cause of our power and will to do good, resists the truth, and is shown and proved to be guilty of reviving the heresy of Pelagius.” This work of Florus appeared under the auspices of Remi, bishop of Lyons, who is reported to have remarked, that not any orthodox churchman could combat the doctrine of Gottschalchus respecting predestination.* Prudentius, at the very commencement of his work, accuses Scotus of being the disciple of Pelagius, Cœlestius, and Julian, and of following them in resisting the grace of Jesus Christ, and the justice of God, and in the denial of original sin. He then enters upon his argument, and shows, “that predestination is distinct from prescience, and that the latter, not the former, extends to sin: that predestination is of two kinds, the one, that by which God hath freely predestined the elect to grace and glory; the other, that by which he hath destined the wicked, whose sins he foresees, to eternal damnation: that man, since the fall, hath not a full liberty and power to do good: that he cannot do it without the grace of Christ, nor resist doing it, when that grace excites and enables him to do it: that no one affirms, that grace wholly destroys free-will, or that predestination imposes any necessity upon men, free-will being nothing more than the voluntary choice and

* Fleury observes on this, that the opinion of Remi is a proof that Gottschalchus was not guilty of the excess of which he is accused, and that he seems chiefly to have erred in using expressions too direct and strong.

unconstrained acting of the mind ; and that the opinions of Scotus, respecting the torments of the damned, are extravagant, and opposed to the doctrines of the church, and the fathers, who declare that their misery consists not simply in the privation of happiness, but in tortures by fire."

Remigius, who succeeded Amolo, the compassionate advocate of Gotteschalchus, in the bishopric of Lyons, was applied to on the same subject by Hincmar ; but the answer he returned afforded as little satisfaction to that haughty-minded prelate as the opinions expressed by his predecessor. There was, however, this peculiarity in his reasonings : while condemning with unqualified asperity the rashness of Gotteschalchus, he supports to the fullest extent the doctrines of Augustine ; and from the position, that both the prescience and predestination of God are infallible, draws the conclusion, " that none of those whom God hath predestined to eternal life, from all eternity, and through his free goodness, shall perish . and that none of those whom God hath predestined to eternal death, through his just judgment, having foreseen their sin, shall be saved ; and this, not because they are unavoidably sentenced to damnation, by the power of God, but because they deserve it by the malignity of their will, which is unconquerable and unchangeable." On the will of God to save all men, he says, that it involves a difficulty ; for that it is certain that all are not saved, but that whatever God wills must come to pass. " How then," he asks, " can he will all men should be saved, when it is plain all men are not ?" After dismissing this, and some other points, as too abstruse for the human intellect, he cites the texts in which Christ is said to have died for all men ; and remarks that, in the order of reconciliation, " the first men are the elect, of whom none can perish ; the second are the faithful, who have received their baptism sincerely, and whose sins are pardoned by grace, but who do not persevere ; the third are such as yet remain in their infidelity, but shall soon be called by the mercy of God ; the fourth are those who

shall always remain in their infidelity, and shall not receive grace, either for a time or in the end." He then proves, on the authority of the fathers, "that Jesus Christ died for the first three, but not, properly speaking, for the wicked, who died before his coming, and without the knowledge of the true religion; nor for infidels, who have been born since, or shall be born in future ages." In respect to free will, he says, "that he much wonders that any man should hold, that since the fall of Adam men cannot use their free-will to do good: that if they added 'without grace,' the proposition would have been orthodox, but to say it in general terms, as implying that grace alone does all the good we do, is to propound an unheard-of and unintelligible doctrine: that free-will may, indeed, be said to be dead and perished, through the sin of the first man, if it be not meant that the nature and essence of the will is destroyed, but only the good which is in the will, that is, the faculty of inclining itself to good, to excite which it has need of grace."

Hincmar, on receiving this answer to his enquiries, assembled the bishops and abbots, who had attended the court of the emperor to Quincy; and finding them ready to espouse his views, he published the four particular propositions, in which were embraced the main branches of his opinion. The first purported that, "there is no predestination but to life, by which God hath chosen out of the condemned mass, into which all men are fallen by the sin of Adam, those whom he hath predestinated by his grace to glory; while, with respect to those whom he hath left in the state of damnation, it is to be understood, that he foresaw they would, but that, instead of having predestined them to destruction, he hath only predestined the eternal punishment which they have merited." In the second proposition it is stated that, "the free-will which we have lost by the sin of the first man is restored by Jesus Christ, and we have a full power to do good, by the assistance of his grace, and to do evil, being forsaken by it." The third sets forth that, "God would have all men, without exception, to be saved,

though they are not all saved ; that those who are saved are delivered by the grace of Christ, and those that perish are damned for their own sins." In the fourth, he says that, " Jesus Christ hath suffered for all men, although all men are not redeemed by the mystery of his passion, which doth not happen, because the price of redemption is not great enough or sufficient, but because they have not faith, or not such faith as is saving ; that is, the faith which worketh by love." *

It was not probable, that articles thus set forth on the authority of one, whose assumption of power was so narrowly watched as that of Hincmar, would be allowed to remain uncontradicted. Remigius, accordingly, soon after, published a treatise which he called " A Censure of the Articles of Quincy." In this book he remarks on the first article, that it was erroneous to say, " that the first man was free to do good, no mention being made of divine assistance, without which neither he nor the angels could do good : that the elect were predestined on account of their good works foreseen ; and that God hath not predestined the wicked to damnation." On the second, he observes, " that too little was said respecting free-will: that the compilers of the articles asserted, that we have utterly lost our free-will, through the sin of Adam, whereas the fathers acknowledge, that though it be weakened by that sin, and cannot be lightly exercised without the assistance of grace, it still exists in man: that we have all, by nature, judgment, reason, and understanding, by which we are able to distinguish that which is good from that which is evil, and that which is just from that which is unjust ; and that we can also, in some degree, choose that which is good ; but that this depends wholly upon the influences of human law, motives, and interests, and has no relation to our eternal salvation, which we can only pursue by the inspiration and motions of grace." In the next place, he points out an error in their saying, " that after regeneration we have the liberty of doing evil, as if we had it not," he observes, " before regeneration." The remarks on the third article

* Dupin.

are lost ; but in those on the fourth he finds fault with their affirming, that Christ died for all men, allowing only that, “ he died for all that are baptized, and for the righteous men under the old dispensation.”

Remigius, by his answer, had placed himself at least on a level with Hincmar as a controversialist ; but he determined to confirm his opinions in the same manner as that powerful prelate did, by an appeal to the judgment of others. He, therefore, assembled a council at Valence, and had the satisfaction of leading the fourteen bishops of which it was composed to the following conclusions, embodied in six canons : in the first, it is forbidden to employ newly-invented expressions on these subjects ; and the doctrines of the Latin fathers are given as the rule of faith. In the second, it is set forth that, “ God hath foreseen from all eternity all the good which righteous men will do by his grace ; and all the evil that sinners will do by their own malice : that the righteous will receive eternal life as a reward of their good actions, and the wicked condemnation as the just consequence of their guilt : that this prescience lays no necessity upon any man, none being condemned but for their original or actual sins. In the third, the predestination of the good to life, and of the bad to eternal misery, is distinctly stated ; but in such a manner that it is made to appear, that in the choosing of the elect God’s mercy preceded their works, while in the condemnation of the wicked their sins preceded his judgment. Yielding to the words of Scripture, the fathers of the council allowed, that Christ died for all those that believe in him ; and, in conclusion, that with respect to the grace of Christ by which men are saved, and the free will of man, weakened by the sin of Adam, but restored by grace, they professed to hold the opinions taught by the founders of the church, confirmed by the councils of Africa and Orange, and professed by the bishops of the apostolic see.”

An account of these decisions was presented to Charles the Bald, who immediately made them known to Hincmar

A reply was with little delay prepared by the archbishop; and in the preface to the work, which is the only portion remaining, he terms the party opposed to him a faction, and expresses his surprise that they should have undertaken the measures they had pursued, without acquainting him with their intentions, or stating any objection to the principles he had laid down. The subject was on this again examined by the members of the council at Valence; and Hincmar appears to have had sufficient influence on their minds to prevent the observations being repeated, which had originally been made on the four articles drawn up at Quincy. Finally, the question respecting the authentication of the canons of the late synod was submitted to pope Nicholas, and he is said to have given them his approval. Hincmar, who, it is reported, opposed this decision of the pontiff, published soon after another extensive treatise on predestination, and again went over the whole extent of the controversy, treating at large of each of the points agitated by the opponents, and defending the opinions he had originally adopted, as alike the doctrines of the church and the fathers.

The controversy respecting predestination and free-will was, without doubt, the most important that had for many centuries engaged the attention of theologians. Nor ought it to be too hastily decided, that all enquiry into such subjects is unfit for the human mind, or inconsistent with the scope, the nature, and privileges of Christian faith. In all matters of extreme moment to the soul of man, the soul will assert the strength and freedom of an intelligent, active spirit, and do its utmost to find a path through the numerous and intricate passages to truth. And so long as it is assured, that the only safe guides are Scripture and the Holy Spirit; that, while yielding to that which it is natural to obey, it must be aided by that which is above nature, it will preserve both its sedateness and its activity, and not depart from either the humility or the simplicity of faith, though engaged in the most exciting of enquiries. But

it is a lamentable fact, that, in almost all the great controversies that have taken place in the Christian world, the pride of intellect, and the jealousy of parties, the desire of conquest, the hopes of aggrandisement, and the obstinacy of dogmatic learning, have both blinded and perverted the mind, preventing it from discerning the objects most valuable to contemplate on its course, and from deriving any advantage from that interchange of vigorous thought, which it should be the sole purpose of controversy to awaken. Such was the case in the dispute we have just described ; and instead of its leading to those results, that deeper humility, that profounder gratitude for the means of holiness and salvation, which it might have been expected to produce, and which, under the divine blessing, might have tended to farther advances in the knowledge of heavenly mysteries, it only inflamed the feelings of the disputants, tempted them into the employment of unsanctified weapons, and filled their minds with a multitude of dark, unintelligible notions.

But the above were not the only controversies which attracted the notice, and unfavourably excited the minds, of the theologians of this period. Towards the conclusion of the preceding century, a question had arisen respecting the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son as well as the Father ; and it was strongly disputed whether the words, “and from the Son,” which were first added to the Nicene creed by the Spanish churches, but afterwards admitted by the Roman pontiffs into general use, ought to be allowed a place in the confession of faith. The original fomenters of the dispute were the monks of Jerusalem, who applied to Charlemagne to prevent the continuance of what they regarded as a scandal to the orthodoxy of their belief. As the matter seemed of importance, a council was assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, and afterwards at Rome, to examine the arguments of those who justified, and those who thus vehemently opposed, the retaining of the objectionable phrase. Leo III. decided, that the doc-

trine which it expressed was perfectly true, but that as the words had been added to the creed without authority, they ought to be expunged. This was allowed by succeeding pontiffs, but the words still continued in the creed as used by the Latin churches; and in the council held at Constantinople to secure the restoration of Photius, an article supposed to have been drawn up by that distinguished theologian was expressly added on the subject. A copy of the creed having been brought into the midst of the assembly, the members of the synod thus declared their determination evermore to preserve it pure and unchanged. "We embrace this symbol," said they, "descending, as it has done, from our ancestors, both in mind, and with open confession; neither adding to it, nor taking from it, neither changing, nor corrupting it: and therefore if any one, by spurious words, by additions or abridgments, shall boldly attempt to adulterate the antiquity of this holy and venerable definition, let him be punished by deposition if of the clergy, and by anathema if of the people."* Little notice was taken at Rome respecting this article, and thus a controversy gradually died away which threatened to involve the whole of Christendom in contention as injurious to its tranquillity as any which preceded them. But no sooner was this source of disquietude exhausted, when a new one appeared in the preposterous question respecting the mode of our Lord's birth, which was long agitated with a daring facility of argument, not less offensive in its details than presumptuous in its application.

While these enquiries into mysteries, before unapproached, were going on, the seeds of much earlier controversies appeared quickening into growth. This was especially the case with respect to those which had been sown in the first days of Manichæism. The perpetual change of circumstances, and the troubles caused by the decay and revolutions of the empire, prevented their systematic developement, but they were

* Cave, Hist. Lit. p. 84.

in the soil ; and every season produced, with its other phenomena, some new evidence of their existence. In this century it was the rise of the Paulicians which indicated the continued operation of that vast and powerful system described, but not always correctly, perhaps, under the general name of Manichæism.* We know the history of this people only from those little inclined to speak of them with favour ; and it may reasonably be allowed that prejudice was not less likely to pervert the truth in their case than in that of others. Whatever were their opinions, they suffered in their defence with patience and magnanimity. From the period of their appearance in any numbers, they were perpetually assailed by emperors and patriarchs as the most virulent of heretics, and barbarities were exercised against them not less fierce and unrelenting than those inflicted on acknowledged traitors to the state. The growth of the sect has been attributed to a variety of causes ; the weakness of the empire, the politic encouragement of the Saracens, and the heretical predilections of the emperor Nicephorus, have all been named as sufficient to account for their increase : but to whichever of these circumstances we ascribe the extension of their numbers, it is certain that by the time Basil the Macedonian ascended the imperial throne, they formed a distinct people, and were in a condition to build several cities, and prepare themselves for meeting any attack on the part of their enemies. Nicephorus is described as having shown them remarkable instances of favour†, and as having been attached to their superstitions and false prophecies. While in this flourishing state, they sent missionaries among the newly converted Bulgarians, who, it is said, received their doctrines, which thence gradually and imper-

* Photius, who has left a treatise against them (see *Wolfii Anecdota Græca*, tom. ii. Hamburg), describes them as a branch of the Manichees ; but intimates that they wished to be called Paulicians, from Paul the Apostle.

† Theophanes, *Monographia*. This author complains that the Manicheans enjoyed the right of living with the rest of the people, and of partaking in the same privileges, under this monarch, p. 413.

ceptibly diffused themselves over Europe. But Theodora, the widow of the emperor Basil, on obtaining the supreme control of public affairs, resolved on putting an effectual bar to the farther progress of this powerful sect. For this purpose she sent emissaries among them, who, followed by bands of armed men, had orders either to convert or annihilate them. They chose the latter mode of proceeding ; and not less than a hundred thousand of the unfortunate Paulicians are computed to have fallen beneath the sword. The astonishment with which we read the accounts of the barbarities inflicted on this persecuted people, is considerably diminished on our opening the pages of contemporary writers. We there find them described in the darkest colours that fear or hatred can inspire. They are accused of having ascribed the existence of material things to the devil ; of having been guilty of vices as offensive to morals as their doctrines were to truth ; and of being so obstinate in their adherence to these errors, that they exceeded even Satan himself in their presumptuous daring.* According to Petrus Siculus, their heresy consisted in the following particulars ; the belief of two principles, the one the author of good, the other the author of evil ; and the denial of Christ being born of the Virgin ; of the change of the bread and wine at the sacrament into his body and blood ; of the sacredness of the cross ; of the authority of the Old Testament and the Epistles of Saint Peter ; and of the divine institution of priests in the government of the church.

It is plain, both from some of the particulars mentioned in this list, and from the language employed against them by Photius and Theophanes, that the zeal with which they were persecuted derived a large portion of its strength from their opposition to established corruptions. In their rejection of the doctrine respecting the conversion of the sacramental elements, they waged war with a dogma which was daily growing into

* "Satan," says Photius, "was silenced by three rebukes from the Lord, but these not by a thousand."

favour throughout Christendom. In refusing to worship the cross, they rebuked the most powerful and the most vindictive of parties ; while, with regard to the other tenets which they are said to have professed, it is easy to see, how readily a little perversion of very defensible opinions might give them the appearance of the most odious heresies: for the doctrine of the two principles was probably no more than a strong assertion of their hatred of sin, and of their belief in the perfect, unmixed, and unchangeable goodness of God. Their rejection of the Old Testament was, in the same manner, perhaps, only a stern adherence to the doctrines of divine grace, and had nothing to do with its divine authority as Scripture, or as a record of the covenant which God made with a peculiar people, but only as it related to justification by works, the notion of which they refused to blend with their belief in the sufficiency of Christ's atonement: while their unwillingness to acknowledge the divine origin of the evangelical priesthood, might have its sole origin in the gross corruptions which had too evidently begun to infect every order of the clergy. It is not pretended that the opinions of the Paulicians were actually of this inoffensive nature ; but we wish to show how possible it is that they might be the victims of arbitrary power, assisted by a zeal which, from various causes, would rather confirm itself in the belief of their guilt, than employ the patience of charity to discover whether it was rightly founded. But the truth probably lies between the extreme opinions which have been formed of their character. They were neither, it may be fairly conjectured, guilty of the gross errors imputed to them by their enemies ; nor so purely evangelical as has been imagined by their apologists. The former is rendered unlikely by their acknowledged appeals to the Gospel, and the rancour with which they were assailed ; and the latter, by the general corruptions of the age, which it can scarcely be believed had left a people, of whom no positive record remains, free from some peculiar taint, or in a strict and saint-like attachment to the Gospel.

The obscurity which hangs over the history of the Paulicians, has happily not reached the annals which describe the labours of Claudius of Turin, and his few, but noble and spiritual, followers. When nearly the whole of Christendom had yielded to the sway of superstition, that devout man employed both his influence and his learning in the attempt to diffuse a pure knowledge of divine truth.* In prosecuting this design he suffered much ; but his efforts received an abundant blessing. Not only were his followers preserved from error ; but he saw a church increase around him which promised to remain steadfast, and which did remain steadfast, in the profession of the truth, when all beyond its narrow boundaries was darkness and confusion.

We cannot find space for any distinct notice of those numerous scholars who so greatly contributed to the intellectual activity of this age ; but their learning and genius were cramped and stimulated by the operation of the very same causes ; and in no period, perhaps, of literary history, can be found an instance of so much mental power in operation, employed within so limited a circle, and producing so few important or practical results. However various the individual character of the writers, their minds were all directed to the same species of enquiry ; however different their powers, they had all the same route to traverse. In the account, therefore, which has been given of the principal controversies of the age, the reader possesses the means of forming a general opinion of the most distinguished men it produced. The arguments of one might be more acute than those of another ; this might defend the doctrines of irresistible grace, while another might verge towards Pelagianism in his views : but the same modes of thought, the same methods of reasoning, and the same design, are to be traced in all. Of those who possess the greatest claim to notice, Alcuin merits the first place, perhaps, in our esteem : but he was equally the slave of system

* Basnage, Hist. l'Eglise.

with the rest of his contemporaries ; and the seven liberal arts, into which he divides the whole mass of human knowledge, appear not to have been advanced a step by the opinions or reasonings of this most distinguished of dialecticians. But if he failed in the power and boldness of originality, he was eminently endowed with the ability of communicating knowledge ; and as the guide and preceptor of Charlemagne, he became the instrument of giving to France both a literature and institutions for its security.*

Rabanus Maurus, the archbishop of Mentz, who took such a conspicuous part in the controversy with Gottischalans, lived at a somewhat later period than Alcuin, and was considered by many as the greatest man of his age. To him Germany appears to have been largely indebted, both in respect to its literature and its theological establishments ; and though in the dispute respecting predestination, he evidently pursued a course little in conformity with the tolerant ideas of the present age, neither the fierceness nor the presumption can be laid to his charge which infected so many of his contemporaries. Hincmar, on the other hand, gave full scope to one of the most ambitious and intolerant spirits that had ever filled the heart of a churchman ; but his talents were great, powerful, and well managed.† Not wanting in any of the learning proper to his profession, he entered into controversy on the abstrusest points of divinity with the same readiness and resolution as he approached any question of mere political expediency. The church of France felt for many years the value of his energetic counsels, nor were the siftings of doctrine and opinion which he caused without their use ; but he acted in the affair of Gottischalans with the most revolting tyranny, and the high praises awarded to his ability and zeal in defence of the faith must be received, on this account, with many modifications.‡

* Alcuini Opera. Vita.

† Fabricius Bibliot. Lat. Med. Ætat. t. iii. p. 790. Cave, Hist. Lit. sæc. Photian.

‡ The affair of his nephew, the bishop of Laon, has cast another shade upon his character ; but that prelate seems to have acted with ingratitude,

Bertramnus* was originally a monk of Corbey; but for some cause left his monastery, which he may be conjectured to have done, on the appointment of Paschasius Radbertus as abbot. Little is known of his life; but the treatise which he wrote against the doctrine of the real presence displays not merely great acuteness, the prevailing characteristic of his contemporaries, but clear good sense, scriptural knowledge, and willingness to argue solely on the foundation of spiritual doctrine. Paschasius suffered great variety of fortune, having raised himself to the dignity above mentioned by the powers of his mind and the skilful management of opportunities, and having lost it by too free an interference with those events and controversies which presented such peculiar dangers to a mind like his. Johannes Scotus Erigena was remarkable, even in an age of polemics, for extensive erudition, converted, by an ever-active mind, into the form of arguments.† He was a native of Ireland, according to general tradition; but some writers state that he was born on the borders of Wales, and others that he was a Scotchman. His great learning and ability recommended him to the notice of Charles the Bald, and he resided at the court of that monarch for several years. At length, the envy created by his popularity and favour with the king, combined with the suspicions which attended his bold and novel dogmas, rendered his situation at court highly disagreeable; and he was induced to accept the invitation of king Alfred to visit England. As the University of Oxford was then in its infancy,

and to have injured, by every means in his power, the very man to whom he owed all his fortune. In the troubles of the kingdom, he took, throughout, the opposite part to his uncle; and, though more than once indebted to him for restoration to his dignity, continued his seditious practices till his disgrace and punishment were inevitable. Cave, *Hist. Lit. art. Hincmar*.

* “*Bertramus, seu idem rectius Ratramnus*.”—Fabricius, tom. i. p. 660. Cave says of him, “he was a man not unlearned, but trusted too much to his own ability.”—*Hist. Lit. art. Pas. Rad.*

† “He was the first,” says Mosheim, “who blended the scholastic theology with the mystic, and formed them into one system.” The same writer comes to a very different conclusion respecting his character to Cave and others. *Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 293.

the monarch gladly availed himself of the services of so accomplished a scholar to promote his design, and Scotus was made professor of geometry and astronomy. His impetuous disposition, however, soon involved him in disputes with his associates, and he hastened from Oxford to find an asylum in a monastic and collegiate establishment at Malmesbury. But he was still, as before, continually engaged in disputations with the ecclesiastics who frequented his school. For some time, they endured his imperious conduct with patience: but their reverence for the powers he displayed had its limits; and moved one day to uncontrollable fury by his provocations, they rushed upon him in a body, and stabbed him to death with the writing instruments which they held in their hands.*

The historian Eginhard, the friend and biographer of Charlemagne; the pious Claudius of Turin, whose scriptural expositions were singularly marked by simplicity and unction; the famous Photius, the most profoundly learned as well as the most celebrated man of the age; our own king Alfred, a translator of Scripture, and a zealous and successful patron of learning, when learning in this country was almost wholly lost; the two Irish writers — Dengal, celebrated for his knowledge of astronomy, and Macesius for his mystical opinion that one intelligent principle inspired the whole human race; the librarian Anastasius, whose lives of the pontiffs form one of the most important historical documents of the period; and Petrus Siculus, the ambassador from the emperor Basil to the Paulicians of Armenia, and the historian of that people; — these, and other writers of the age, afford, in their numerous works, a degree of power and intelligence which raises them far above the mediocrity which might have been expected to prevail in a season of rapidly increasing darkness. But it was not the absence of intellect, or even of knowledge, to a certain extent, which had to be deplored. The great evils of

* It is on the authority of Cave that this extraordinary circumstance is related; but the fierceness with which scholastic disputes inspired the mind renders it far from improbable.

the age were an ambition to discover and define, without the means of advancing the limits of real information, or the patience to seek them ; a mingling of every abstruse question with some party interest ; and the facility with which an overwhelming authority could, at any moment, be brought against those who ventured to combat with purely spiritual weapons against, " spiritual wickedness in high places." Thought was thus forced perpetually into new channels ; but never flowed long enough in the same track, to deepen the bed of the stream, or spread fertility in its progress. Still farther to abridge the possibility of improvement, the base and ruinous custom had become legitimatised of inventing those examples, illustrations, and authorities, which it was felt were necessary to the support of a theory or a principle, but could not be discovered in the archives of truth and reality. Thus legends were produced without number ; circumstances, in themselves authentic, were twisted into every possible form to serve a momentary purpose ; every source of natural information was systematically corrupted ; and the forgery of artificial documents grew into a recognised instrument of ecclesiastical authority. Under the name of decretals, documents were published to the world which, purporting to belong to the earliest ages, served as a claim for Rome to the enjoyment of all its usurped power and privileges. The success which attended these proceedings among the multitude, encouraged fresh experiments of the same kind ; and it is easy to perceive, how ready the whole intellectual structure must have been to fall, when its two main pillars were ingenuity and fraud.

CHAP. XVII.

PROSPECTS AT THE OPENING OF THE CENTURY.—STATE OF THE GREEK CHURCH.—SUCCESSION OF THE EMPERORS.—THE CHURCH IN THE WEST.—ROME AND ITS PONTIFFS.—DEGENERACY OF THE CLERGY.—LEARNED MEN.—STATE OF THE HUMAN MIND.

THE preceding century afforded, at its close, few signs of advancing Christianity ; but it had not passed away without leaving visible traces of the march of Providence, and the presiding power of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the North, paganism was fast declining, assailed on the one side by victorious princes, and on the other by self-devoted missionaries. The Saxons, the Danes, and the Swedes ; the Bulgarians and Mœsians, and even the fierce and warlike Russians ; had bowed their heads to the yoke of the Gospel : and the Christian must have travelled far to discover any wide tract, which still remained untrodden by some preacher of the cross. But a very material circumstance is here to be noted. The conversions of these heathen countries were, in the main, owing to the zeal and piety of individuals : they were not the result of growth and expansion in the main body of the church ; and they consequently failed to exhibit, except in some few instances, those signs of life and spirituality, which, had they been the growth of the substance, must have been every where apparent. It is only, therefore, with considerable modifications, that the extension of the Christian name can be trusted to as a proof of the prosperity of the church ; and did we not know that the Almighty was ever sowing the seeds of salvation, and that, though many tares spring up, a harvest may with confidence be looked for, the gloom and disorder which characterised the period about to be described would have almost led to the melancholy idea, that the power of the Gospel

had been withdrawn as a punishment to men's wickedness and turbulence.

In the emperor Leo, the East possessed a monarch endowed with many of the qualities most essential to his station. Not only were the general offices of government better supplied, and the laws more equally administered under his reign than had long been the case, but the code itself was reformed, and the world was indebted to his labours for the reawakened attention to a system which formed one of the strongest barriers existing against the evils of the age. Unfortunately, he exposed himself, by contracting a fourth marriage, to the reprobation of the wise and pious, and to the machinations of the ambitious. In vain did the venerable patriarch Nicholas warn him against violating a rule which had begun to be considered as one of the most sacred in the discipline of the church: equally unheeded were the clamours of the people; and when all the arts of persuasion had been employed to induce the patriarch to forego his austere commands, but without avail, Leo put forth the arm of despotism, and, in spite of every remonstrance, sent Nicholas into exile, and elevated the more complacent Euthymius to the patriarchal chair.* He died shortly after this event, leaving his throne to be occupied by his brother Alexander and his infant son Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the fruit of his last marriage. The former, a prey to every species of vice, lived to enjoy his fortune only a few months; and the latter, after having been long under the tutelage of his mother Zoa and her ministers, became equally subject to his father-in-law, Romanus Leucapenes, who soon made himself sole master of the empire. In the course of the twenty years which this sovereign continued at the head of the state, few events occurred to retard the downward rush of the stream: he was severe in the administration of justice, and those who are little inclined to eulogise him, allow that he ever

* The pope's legates authorised the marriage, it not being contrary to the law of their church.

used a most generous benevolence towards the poor. But he set an example of the worst kind in the appointment of his son Theophylactes to the patriarchal dignity. At the time of its vacancy, the prince was too young to be installed, with any degree of decency, in so important an office. A monk named Trypho was therefore elevated to the seat, on the express condition that he would retire as soon as Theophylactes could safely supply his place. The twofold iniquity of this affair is evident. It was an impious act in the sovereign to elevate his son to an ecclesiastical dignity, sacred as is every office in the church to spiritual worth and knowledge ; and equally impious was it in the monk, to allow so solemn a rite as his consecration to be performed in a manner which essentially falsified its intention.

At the death of Romanus, Constantine recovered his authority ; but his habits of sensuality destroyed the beneficial effects which might have been looked for from the patronage he bestowed on literature. Theophylactes, in the mean while, disgraced his high dignity by a union of the grossest folly and vice ; and the church had reason to rejoice when his death made way for the better-principled and more pious Polyeuctes. Constantine, who died in the year 959, was succeeded by his son Romanus, who fell a speedy victim to his debaucheries, leaving two infant sons. These legitimate heirs to the throne were displaced by Nicephorus Phocas, captain of the guard, who, to the claims he possessed on popular favour from his victories over the Saracens, added those pretensions to the throne which might be derived from a marriage with the consort of the late sovereign. He perished by the hands of conspirators, admitted into his chamber by her to whom he was thus indebted for his elevation ; and the people of Rome rejoiced at the death of a man who had dared, while defending his sole right to the title of emperor, to denominate the pope a miserable barbarian, and his ambassadors wretches too vile to be sacrificed to the offended dignity of the state. Equally great was the triumph of

the Saracens at his premature death. No monarch had fought against them with more success, or afforded a fairer reason to hope that the insolence of these people might, by valour and discipline, be repressed. Damascus and Tripoli, with other towns in Syria, were recovered from the infidel by his arms; the isles of Crete and Cyprus fell at the same time into his power; and had the Christian world been, at this period, united in its views and interests, the Ottoman empire might have never been allowed to spring like a giant from its cradle.

A. D.

969.

Dissensions had separated the followers of the prophet into numberless sects, and the caliph was less powerful than the weakest of Christian sovereigns. The new monarch, John Zimisce, had been, like his predecessor, captain of the guard, and like him was distinguished for valour and conduct in the field. His victories over the Bulgarians and the Russians reminded the people of the brightest days of the empire, and they rewarded him with a triumph, which, as its splendid pageantry passed along the streets of Constantinople, inspired a feeling only too evanescent not to be productive of good. After a short but splendid reign of six years and a half, he perished by the knife of an assassin, the slave of the grand chamberlain Basil who, with the empress Theophania exercised, for many years, the chief authority of the state, in the name of the young emperors Constantine and Basil, the sons of Romanus the Second. The reign of these princes, though endangered for a time by the revolt of Bardas, extended far into the following century, but was productive of none of those important changes which it is our province to record.

In looking back upon the period, occupied, as we have related, by reigns so little fruitful in good, but less distinguished than many which preceded them by furious contentions and barbarities, one of the principal circumstances to be noted is, the decreasing reverence paid to the patriarchal character. Thus Theophylactes was not only raised to the chair by the grossest violation of canonical law, but continued throughout his career to

display the utmost contempt for the sobriety and holiness which it became him to exhibit; while Polyuctes, though in the main virtuous, evidently allowed himself to be bribed into permitting corruptions on the part of the sovereign, which a few years before would have brought down on the greatest prince in Christendom the uncompromising anger of the church. Another patriarch, Basil the monk, was deposed, either on account of some flagitious conduct, or by the will of a faction; and his successor, Anthony Studites, saw fit, during not less than five years, to leave his church without the counsel or protection of a chief. Another circumstance worthy of notice is, the silence of those long-existing parties, which till now had not ceased to pour forth their rage against each other, to the scandal of all true Christians, and the ruin of piety and truth.* We fear, however, that the cause of this tranquillity was not any increase of light or charity, but the mere coldness which follows a period of excitement when the living principle is itself nearly exhausted. It is remarkable to find that the method now made use of to heal the injuries occasioned by heresy was, to remove the heretics in a mass to some other quarter of the Christian world. This was done by Zimisces, at the advice of the patriarch of Antioch, and vast numbers of the Manichees were transported into Thrace, to assist in diffusing from thence their dangerous doctrines through Europe. It also deserves to be mentioned at the same time, that the power of the sovereign appears to have been increasing against the eastern church, in almost the same proportion as in the West the power of the church was invading that of the state. Leo was not the first emperor who had ventured to depose a patriarch because he refused to legalise his violence or his sensuality; but it was for Nicephorus Phocas to employ the expedient of replenishing his empty coffers with the treasures of the church, and for the bishops of that period to assemble and vote away their possessions to pay the soldiers of his army. Whether these prelates

* Dupin, vol. viii. p. 3.

acted thus from weakness and servility, or from the noble principle of Christian resignation, is a question not easy to be decided; but the conduct of the emperor proves that he had a far surer hold on ecclesiastical wealth than his predecessors. It is, perhaps, to this circumstance of the advancement of the imperial authority over the declining church, that we may attribute the singular boldness with which Nicephorus resented the insult he received from the Roman pontiff. Had he been accustomed to regard the chiefs of his own church with the wonted reverence of earlier days, he would not have ventured to express a thought of putting the messengers of a pope to death because their master had refused him the title of universal sovereign.

The western church, at this period, was involved in far deeper gloom than that which obscured the progress of the Gospel in the East. Licentiousness had become the common ally of ambition; and instead of the pride, the thirst for dominion, the love of pomp, which gave the first indications of the decline of piety, we have now to behold the pontifical character debased by the more odious vices of lust and violence. Stephen, who had disgusted the world by the disinterment of Formosus, died strangled in a prison. His successor Romanus lived only a few days after ascending the throne, and John the ninth, a monk, and deacon of Tivoli, was then appointed to the vacant dignity. The political state of Italy presented, at his elevation, the most discouraging prospect. Louis, king of Provence, laid claim to the sovereignty of the country, as the grandson, on the side of his mother, of the emperor Louis, son of Lothaire. In the prosecution of this claim he was opposed by Berenger, duke of Friuli, who after a fierce contest with Guido, duke of Spoleto, and his son Lambert, saw himself master of nearly the whole country. Louis was at first successful; but in the end fell betrayed into the hands of his enemy, who ordered his eyes to be put out, and then marched to Rome, where he demanded of John the rite of consecration as emperor. Un-

willing to expose himself to the danger of refusing this demand. John performed the ceremony ; but, immediately on Berenger's departure, sent for Lambert, another claimant to the throne, and proclaimed him emperor. He then retired to Ravenna, where he soon after died ; but not till he had confirmed his proceedings at Rome, and re-established the canons of Formosus.

Benedict IV. enjoyed his elevation little more than a year, and was succeeded by Leo V., who fell a victim to the treachery of Christophus, by whom he was driven from the throne and cast into a dungeon. Christophus, in his turn, was deposed in a few months by Sergius, the rival of Theodorus, and expiated his guilt in chains. The name of Sergius is branded with infamy, even by the most zealous advocates of the papacy. Rome was at this time almost governed by Theodora, a woman as celebrated as she was vicious, and who owed her influence to Adalbert, marquis of Tuscany, whose power and authority were universally acknowledged. With Marozia, the daughter of this abandoned and intriguing woman, Sergius contracted an infamous alliance, the fruit of which was a son, who in the sequel ascended the pontifical throne. At the death of Sergius, Anastasius III. was promoted to the see, and acquired, during his pontificate of ten years, the noble praise of piety and beneficence. He was succeeded by Lando, who died about six months after his election ; and the church then beheld another proof of the shameful influence possessed over its concerns by the daughters of Theodora.* The younger of the two, Theodora, had imbibed a passion for John, a priest of Ravenna, similar to that which her sister had entertained for Sergius. On the death of the bishop of Bologna, she enjoyed sufficient power to obtain for her favourite the vacant diocese ; but this prevented their customary intercourse ; and on the death of the arch-

* The guilt and intrigues of Theodora and her daughters are described by historians in a very confused manner ; a circumstance which appears to have resulted from the mother and the younger daughter having had the same name. Dupin, vol. viii. p. 7. Fleury. Mosheim.

bishop of Ravenna, John was promoted to that dignity in gross violation of the canon which forbade such a removal of bishops from one diocese to another. The sudden death of the pope offered another occasion for Theodora's exertions in favour of her lover, and she succeeded with little difficulty in placing him on the throne.

The reign of this pontiff, thus infamously elevated, was protracted through fourteen years. In the course of that period he marched in person against the Saracens, who still infested the country, and drove them for a time from Italy. Similar success attended his other measures ; but the patronage which he heaped on his brother awakened a feeling of jealousy in the minds of Guido, the son of the marquis of Tuscany, and his wife Marozia, the former mistress of Sergius. This feeling soon increased into ungovernable rage ; and John was seized by their orders, plunged into a dungeon, and shortly after put to death.

Nothing of importance is recorded respecting the short pontificates of Leo VI. and Stephen VII ; but, on the death of the latter, Marozia raised to the throne the son she had borne to Sergius, who, under the name of John XI., ruled the church about two years. He was then deposed, and cast into prison by his brother Alberic, who, to revenge himself for a supposed insult, on Hugh, king of Lombardy, the present husband of Marozia, had taken possession of Rome, and exercised the power he enjoyed, by inflicting the heaviest penalties on all who belonged to the party of that prince, not excepting his own mother, who had to share with the deposed pontiff the miseries of close captivity. But whatever were the vices of Alberic, the church recovered, at the commencement of his rule, somewhat of its former tranquillity. The new pope, Leo VII., was a man of piety and honourable name ; and through the wise exertions he made to restore peace, the king of Lombardy and Alberic were induced to enter into an adjustment of their differences. Never, however, did a

country present a greater scene of disorder than did Italy at this period. The contests perpetually waged between Berenger and the other pretenders to the sovereignty, had thrown the people into a ferment, which deprived both law and religion of their customary force; while the Saracens, taking advantage of this state of things, again sailed from the shores of Africa, to make fresh attempts on the rich prize which Italy seemed always to hold out to adventurers. Genoa paid the forfeit for the licentiousness and folly which governed the land. Its citizens were put to the sword without distinction, and the treasures which adorned its noble churches formed the rich freight of the barbarian's fleet. The passages of the Alps, in the mean time, were held by another party of the infidels; and death or spoliation met the pilgrims to Rome, at every point of their rugged journey. A.D.

The pontificate of Leo lasted little more than three 939 years, and he was succeeded by Stephen VIII., who, being to hated by the Romans on account of his German origin, 962. was soon after his accession so barbarously maimed that he could never again appear in public. He died in the year 942, and was followed by Martin or Marinus II., whose pontificate lasted about the same time as that of his predecessor, and was characterised more by works of piety and benevolence than by any remarkable acts of general importance. The same may be said of his successor, Agapetus II.; and, while Italy at large was torn by the contentions of new aspirants to power, Rome had reason to rejoice in the possession of tranquillity, secured to her by the influence and good policy of Alberic. This comparative prosperity, however, was not of long continuance. On the death of Alberic, he was succeeded by his son Octavian, a youth only sixteen years of age, who added to his inexperience and ambition inclinations and habits most vicious. The death of the pontiff, two years after, afforded him an occasion for the exercise of his power and the gratification of his pride. Disregarding every consideration of ecclesiastical law or decency, he forcibly obtruded himself into the pontifical

chair ; and was allowed both by the clergy and the people—such was the degraded state of the church—to remain in the quiet possession of that sacred dignity.* But Berenger and his son Adalbert, who had now made themselves masters of Italy, manifested little inclination to yield any portion of their authority to the youthful pontiff ; while he was as little disposed to endure their insolence and intrusions. Possessing himself no means of removing the obnoxious princes, he wrote to king Otho of Germany, praying him to hasten to the relief of the Romans ; and in these entreaties he was joined by several eminent ecclesiastics, who had been oppressed by Berenger, and desired nothing more ardently than to see him expelled from Italy. Otho acceded to the wishes of the petitioners ; and, having speedily made himself master of Lombardy, of which he was crowned king, marched to Rome, whence he drove Adalbert without resistance, and received from the hands of John the imperial crown and investiture. Scarcely, however, had Otho left the city, when the pontiff, who had sworn fidelity to him on the relics of Saint Peter, changed his opinion of the measures which had been taken, and sent messengers to Adalbert, inviting him to return, and assuring him, on oath, that he should be put in immediate possession of the supreme authority. Otho was quickly informed of this, and of the gross offences committed by John against the laws of morality ; but his moderation was equal to his other virtues, and he mildly observed, “ The pope is as yet but a child ; he may be improved by the example of good men. I hope to reclaim him from his extravagances by honest reproofs and wholesome advice, and then we will say, with the prophet, Behold the change made by the hand of the Most High ! ” To the persons whom John sent with promises of amendment, he replied, “ that he was glad the pope had promised to reform and become a better man : that, for his own part, he had strictly observed

* He assumed the name of John XII., and was the first pope who changed his name on ascending the throne. Fleury. Dupin.

the agreement made between them ; but that, with regard to the restoration of the territories of the church, he must obtain possession of them before he could return them to the pontiff." The forbearance manifested in these answers made no impression on the mind of John, who continued to pursue his designs in favour of Adalbert with more zeal than ever. When the messenger of Otho enquired of the Romans themselves, whence the pope could have conceived so inveterate a dislike to their master, the citizens simultaneously replied, " Pope John hates the emperor, to whom he is indebted for every thing, just as the devil hates his Creator. The emperor is wholly intent on pleasing God, and doing good to both the church and the state ; the pope is altogether engaged on the contrary part. He has bestowed on a certain widow," continued they, " the government of several towns, and has enriched her with crosses and chalices of gold taken from the church of St. Peter. He has, moreover, a criminal intercourse with other women : the Lateran palace, formerly the habitation of saints, is become a brothel, in which he lodges his mistress, the sister of her who was his father's."

Otho at length yielded to the solicitations of the principal men of Rome, and proceeded thither to make a personal enquiry into the state of affairs. The pontiff and Adalbert fled at his approach, carrying with them a large portion of the public treasure. A council was then summoned for the purpose of taking into consideration what measures were to be pursued in this critical juncture. In the examination of the pontiff's actions, new instances were brought forward of his abandoned conduct, and the assembly universally proclaimed him a monster, unfit to be suffered within the pale of the Christian church. To the questions which Otho put on the subject, they replied that, " they were willing to be anathematised if they had laid aught to the charge of John of which he had not been guilty ; that, if the emperor doubted them, there could be no question of the truth of that which his whole army had

seen ; namely, the disgrace which John had heaped upon his sacred dignity by appearing at the head of his forces clad from top to toe in armour, and exposing himself to the danger of being taken prisoner, which would have actually followed his temerity, had not the Tiber been between him and the imperial forces.”*

It was deemed expedient, before pronouncing the sentence of deposition, to issue a formal summons to oblige the fugitive pontiff to appear at the bar of the synod. A letter was accordingly written in the name of the emperor, and of such of the bishops of Liguria, Tuscany, Saxony, and France as were then resident at Rome. In this letter, which accorded to John all the usual titles of his office, he was informed that, the emperor having enquired of the clergy and people of Rome the cause of his absence, they had accused him of crimes which the most reprobate would shudder to acknowledge ; that they had charged him with homicide, perjury, sacrilege, and incest ; and that it was said he had drunk health to the devil, and sworn, in gambling, by Jupiter and Venus.” To this letter, which concluded with an earnest request that he would present himself to the synod, and answer the accusations brought against him, John thus replied, “ We hear you design to nominate another pope ; but if such be your intention, we hereby excommunicate you in the name of the Almighty God, and thus render you incapable either of ordaining any minister of the church, or of celebrating the mass.” On the receipt of this answer a second summons was sent ; but the bearers of the instrument not meeting with the fugitive, they brought it back to the meeting, which, after a short discussion, proceeded to the final execution of its counsels, pronouncing with due solemnity the deposition of John, and electing in his place Leo, the chief secretary of the Roman church.

The promise of a brighter prospect afforded by these measures was speedily shown to be fallacious. Scarcely had the emperor dismissed a portion of his troops, as

* Dupin. Fleury.

no longer necessary to the support of his cause, when the capricious and versatile Romans formed a sudden resolution in favour of John ; and, surrounding the city with barricades, threatened Otho with destruction. But he had still about him a band of faithful followers ; and, supported by these, he attacked and routed the insurgents. Unfortunately, the clemency which Leo induced him to show on his departure, nullified the advantage gained by this victory. He had no sooner returned the hostages which were placed in his hands as a pledge of future fidelity, than another revolt commenced. Leo narrowly escaped death by flight. John was brought back ; and, in a synod composed of sixteen bishops, who had the infamous temerity to espouse his cause, the decisions of the former assembly were declared invalid, and those who passed them guilty of an offence which merited the severest anathemas. The triumph, however, of John was of brief duration : in the very embrace of licentious pleasure he was cut off by the dagger of an assassin ; and died, as he had lived, hopeless and reprobate.

Affairs were not improved by the death of John. The people continued their resistance to the government of Otho ; and the clergy seconded their wishes by electing Benedict, a cardinal dean, to the pontifical chair. On receiving intelligence of the new revolt, the emperor again led his troops to Rome, which he found prepared for a regular siege. Famine, however, shortly obliged the inhabitants to open the gates ; and pope Leo, following in the track of the imperial forces, again ascended the throne. At the council, immediately summoned in the palace of the Lateran, the unfortunate Benedict was brought before the judgment seat of the restored pontiff. Broken in spirit, and overwhelmed with the fear of impending ruin, he prostrated himself, bathed in tears, at the feet of the emperor, confessing his errors, and imploring pity. But the stern and inflexible Leo performed, without wavering, the task to which his public duty and personal feeling equally urged him.

Snatching the pallium from his humbled rival, he took the baton in his hands, which had been borne by the miserable pontiff as the emblem of his authority ; and, breaking it asunder, held it up in scorn to the people. He then made him sit on the ground ; and, having stripped him of all his priestly garments, was about to remove the deacon's vest, the last sign of sacred office, when the emperor, giving way to his feelings, and with tears in his eyes, besought Leo to withhold his hand, and remain content with the penalty he had already inflicted. Otho's request was expressed too earnestly to be refused ; and Benedict, who would otherwise, in all probability, have been condemned to death, was left in his deacon's garb, and only sentenced to perpetual exile. The emperor took him with him on his departure into Germany ; and, as he was a man of great learning and piety, though betrayed into the acceptance of the pontificate while a lawfully elected pope was living, he employed the short remainder of his days in teaching the Gospel, to the great edification of the people among whom he died.*

A. D.
965.

The death of Leo himself occurred at the same time as that of his unfortunate rival ; and Otho being informed of the event, exercised the authority conferred on him by the synod in which Benedict was deposed, of nominating his successor.† As John, bishop of Narni, had proved himself strongly attached to his party, he appointed him to the vacant chair, or so plainly intimated his wishes on the subject, that he was elected to it by the clergy, without opposition. But whatever had been the disorders consequent on the free exercise of their rights as electors to ecclesiastical dignities, when the people and the clergy chose their pastors, the interference of the emperor was now proved to be fraught with a danger fully equivalent to the former evils. The new pon-

* Fleury. Dupin. It is generally allowed that he would have merited the papacy in a lawful manner.

† Some authors, as Fleury, place Domnus after both Benedict and Boniface ; but his pontificate was so short and unimportant that it is of little consequence which statement is followed.

tiff, not only trusting to the support of the monarch, but assuming the consequence of a dignitary who owed his authority to an independent power*, acted toward the chief persons in the city with a degree of haughtiness and severity which the temper of the times ill disposed them to bear. Fresh tumults, therefore, broke out: the pontiff was seized and cast into prison; and Otho found himself again obliged to march with his army to subdue the factions which thus distracted the capital of the Christian world. He took signal vengeance on those who were charged with having been the authors of the sedition. The consuls were sent as prisoners into Germany; the prefect of the city, after having been publicly whipped, and ignominiously dragged through the streets, was condemned to the same punishment; while the decemviri, a shadow of the ancient senate, were hung on a gallows.†

In the council which Otho assembled at Ravenna, about two years after this occurrence, he formally restored to the church the whole of the territory which had been granted it by Charlemagne; and the following Christmas, establishing thereby a reciprocity of obligation, the pontiff solemnly crowned Otho the younger as the acknowledged heir to the imperial crown. The remainder of John's pontificate was passed without disturbance, and some efforts were made by his directions to carry on the work of evangelising the North; but his instituting a ceremony for the consecration of church bells shows the tendency of his mind to confirm and increase the superstitions of the age; which, from this and other circumstances of a similar character, appears to have been every day growing more enamoured of superstition, as it lost the spirit of holiness and charity.

Domnus, the successor of this pontiff, possessed the A. D. dignity but three months; and Benedict, who was 973.

* By the act referred to, it was decreed that the emperor should have the right of choosing the pope, and of investing archbishops and bishops; it being forbidden either to elect a pontiff, or to confirm a bishop in his see, till he should receive investiture from the sovereign. Dupin, vol. viii. p. 13—67. Basnage, Hist. de l'Eglise.

† These barbarities are ascribed to Otho the younger.

elevated to the throne on his decease, soon rendered himself so hateful to the people, that he was torn from his palace in an insurrection, and finally perished in prison, by strangulation. The author of this murder was a cardinal deacon, named Boniface, who, notwithstanding his crimes, found means to ascend the pontifical throne ; but his fate afforded another instance of the fact, so frequently illustrated by the events of this age, that the abandoned and licentious may much more easily obtain a dignity than they can preserve it when gained. Disgusted at his impiety, the Romans chased him from the city ; but in his flight he carried with him some of the richest ornaments of the Vatican, and trusted to procure, through his ill-gotten wealth, a safe asylum at Constantinople. Benedict VII. was then elevated to the chair ; and he retained the dignity for more than nine years. The death of Otho the younger, who died broken-hearted on account of the defeat he had sustained from the Greeks and Saracens, seemed on the point of involving Italy in new troubles ; but the influence exercised by this pontiff averted the threatened disorder ; and Otho III., son of the preceding emperor, was crowned by him a few months before his decease. The successor of Benedict was Peter, bishop of Pavia, who assumed the name of John XIV. : but he had scarcely taken possession of his dignity when Boniface returned from Constantinople ; and, with unexampled effrontery, laid claim to the throne which he had so basely vacated. Such was the state of Rome at this period, that the vilest of characters, aided by wealth and possessing a sufficient degree of boldness, were sure of being able to form a party ready to assist them in all their designs, and support them as long as their resources should last, or their ability enable them to keep their passions on the ferment. Boniface, therefore, soon found himself in a condition to assail the reigning pontiff ; and having succeeded in his attack, he threw the unfortunate John into one of the dungeons of the Castle of St. Angelo,

where, in the course of a few months, he perished of cold and hunger. Boniface, however, died soon after this victim of his furious malice ; and such was the joy with which the event was hailed, that the very creatures whom he had promoted in reward for their services expressed their sense of the deliverance, by piercing his dead body with their lances, and then dragging it naked through the streets to the statue of Constantine.

Little of importance occurred during the ten years occupied by the pontificate of John XV. His chief characteristic was a love of wealth, and the Romans, though dissatisfied with his government, preferred enduring his exactions to risking a contest with the emperor, whom, on every prospect of danger, he called to his assistance. At his death, Otho obliged the clergy and the people to elect his nephew Bruno, a German, and only twenty years of age. But the chief control of the city was at present in the hands of the senator Crescentius, a man whom the emperor could not fail to view with feelings of fear and jealousy. On visiting Rome, therefore, for the purpose of receiving consecration, he undertook measures for his expulsion ; but was prevented from putting them in practice by the persuasions of his nephew, who had assumed the appellation of Gregory V. The clemency of the pontiff was ill rewarded. Crescentius, on the departure of the emperor, drove him from the city, and bestowed the pontifical dignity on a Greek, who took the name of John XVI. Gregory in the mean time fled into Lombardy ; and, having summoned the several bishops to meet him at Pavia, he there excommunicated both Crescentius and John, his sentence, it is said, being supported by nearly all Italy, Germany, and France. The emperor, on his part, lost no time in proceeding to the capital, where his appearance struck instant terror into the hearts of the guilty Romans. John was apprehended when on the point of leaving the city ; and the officers of the emperor, dreading lest their master should show any forbearance toward the culprit, immediately tore out

his tongue and his eyes. Crescentius suffered the gentler punishment of decapitation ; and Gregory, thus freed from his enemies, retained the papal dignity till the year 999. He was succeeded by Gerbert, archbishop of Ravenna, whom Otho caused to be elected in gratitude for the services he had rendered him as his instructor. This pontiff, who bore the name of Sylvester II., governed the church about four years ; but nothing of importance is recorded of his reign, except the circumstance that, at his request, the emperor endowed the church of Vercelli with the complete public authority of the city ; which was the first instance, it is observed, of such a grant.

Never was the purity or stability of an institution more endangered by a rapid succession of the basest-minded men, than were those of the church, through the whole of this century, by the pontiffs who pretended to the direction of its affairs.* If we enquire the cause of this marked and more than usually rapid decline in morality, and in the appearance even of discipline, we shall find an answer in the circumstance that Italy was, throughout the whole of the age, a perpetual prey to every species of faction, rebellion, and open warfare ; and especially in this, that the pontificate, being now conjoined with temporal dignities and wealth, was a prize which the most worthless, if possessed of power, would aim at with eager ambition. We can scarcely imagine that one, indeed, of those many worthless and depraved men who sought and acquired the dignity, would have desired such a species of elevation, had it not been attended with the riches which enabled them to indulge their base appetites, and the power which furnished them with all the instruments coveted by ambition. Had the pontifical robes possessed no charm but that which they acquired from the living graces of him who wore them, and had the chair of state been raised no higher than it could be fairly lifted up by the willing love and admiration of a devout church, they would have re-

Fleury. Dupin. Baronius himself speaks with the deepest sentiments of affliction at the state of the church in this century.

mained unsought by worldly men, to be conferred by scrutinising congregations on experienced and spiritual pastors. The interference of the sovereign in the appointment to the pontifical dignity may be regarded as the necessary result of the temporal advantages with which it was associated ; and thus a new and fruitful source of evils was opened in the bosom of the church. It was felt that in whatever degree the power and wealth which pertained to the papacy were the gift of the state, in that degree the head of the church ought to render obedience and service to its chief magistrate, aiding him in his political measures by every possible exertion of influence, and remoulding the church, and adjusting its relations, as near as decency would permit, to the rule and measure of state expediency. Still further : in proportion as the clergy became secularised themselves, and thereby overstepped the spiritual law of righteousness, which, while they remained separate from the world, was amply sufficient to secure their allegiance, it was absolutely necessary for the state to interfere with their arrangements, and exercise lordship over their inheritance. They formed too powerful a body to be left to themselves ; their spiritual jurisdiction might have been safely yielded them by the most suspicious monarch in the world ; but this spiritual sovereignty, when blended with temporal rank, and backed by all the affluence which could be gained in a corrupt world by the allurements of riches and the deceitful fascinations of ceremony, was properly the rival of every species of power which could have its birth from civilisation, and consequently demanded without ceasing the vigilant observation of the temporal magistrate. But this interference of secular authority with the church, though the necessary consequence of its secularisation, was always regarded with the utmost jealousy by those who administered its affairs ; and thus, in addition to the innumerable ills inflicted on its interests by the various causes of corruption, were those which naturally attend a condition of constant warfare or suspicion.

We may thus in some measure account for the deplorable state of the church at this melancholy period ; but there were, doubtless, many circumstances of a minor kind, which, rising from the general agitation of the political world, greatly augmented the virulence of the deeper-seated principles of evil. The uncertainty which existed respecting the right of succession ; the little security afforded to property ; the imperfect knowledge of legislature, as founded on a system of reciprocal rights and duties ; all contributed to increase the darkness which, gathered from its own corruptions, now enveloped the church. It affords, however, consolation to the mind of a reflecting Christian to remember, that the purposes of God are ever carried steadily forward, notwithstanding the resistance made to them by the passions of evil men ; and that, though the visible church may become corrupt, and stagger with the intoxication of pride, avarice, and sensuality, the spiritual church—the core of the kingdom—will always remain sound, and effectually resist by its purity the pernicious vapours which circulate around it.

In an age when so many disorders prevailed, it would be vain to look for any sign of advancement in intellectual or moral science. The letters of the popes relate to the affairs of the day, and only confirm the general assertions of history. Luitprand, who was the author of greatest note in this century, received deacon's orders at Pavia, and was then appointed to the important office of secretary to Berenger II. In this situation he remained several years ; but, having fallen into disgrace with that prince, he attached himself to the emperor Otho, by whom he was sent as ambassador to Constantinople, which city he had already visited when in the service of Berenger.* His narrative of what he learnt respecting the Greek empire during these visits, forms his principal production ; but, however valuable it may be as history, it affords very scanty materials to

* Dupin, vol. viii. p. 28. Cave, Hist. Lit. Fabricius, Bib. Med. Ævi, tom. iv. p. 859.

redeem the character of the times. The writings of Ratherius, who was bishop of Verona, but lived in a state of perpetual controversy with his clergy, abound in striking indications of the spirit of papacy. His great object in whatever he published was, to support the authority of the canons, and the right of the Roman church to act as their interpreter. In answer to the enquiries of some of his clergy on a point of difficulty, he remarks, that Rome was the place where knowledge should be sought: "for there," says he, "are the most eminent doctors in the world; there flourish the heads of the universal church; there may be examined the constitutions of episcopacy, and the other ecclesiastical institutions; there those who ought to be approved of are received, and those who ought to be rejected are rejected. Nothing that is disannulled there can be of force elsewhere; and nothing which is ordered there can be abolished."

Atto, bishop of Vercelli, was another zealous and powerful advocate of the church and its canons. He bitterly complains of the burthens imposed upon the clergy; but derived consolation from the elevating belief that the church, being established on the confession of a true faith and in the love of Christ, would ever remain secure, whatever might be the attacks made upon its members. "O happy house!" he exclaims, "neither overthrown by storms, nor shattered by floods, nor shaken by winds: though assaulted continually, the gates of hell shall never prevail against thee; nor shall either secret temptations or open persecutions; the attacks of malicious spirits, or the corruption of vices and impieties; ever compel thee to yield." In speaking on the influence which the state was beginning to exercise in the government of the church, he observes:—"The civil authority encroaches on the ecclesiastical; and the latter is crushed by the former, which ought to support it: so that, as in the election of prelates the will of the prince is followed more than the desires of the holy

fathers, even so, in their condemnation, more attention is paid to caprice than to the canons.”*

But the palm of scholarship has been accorded to Gerbert, who ascended the pontifical throne as Sylvester II. Both as a mathematician and as a classic†, he carried his investigations beyond the generality of his most enlightened contemporaries; and such was the wonder which his discoveries created in the minds of the ignorant multitude, that they placed him, according to the custom of the age, among the professors of forbidden arts.‡ But he was involved, like his contemporaries, in the darkness of doubt and anxiety on the main subjects of his enquiry: his public situation carried his thoughts into the quick and turbid current of events; and though greatly gifted, he possessed not sufficient power to stem the torrent. Abbo, abbot of Fleury, occupies also a conspicuous place among the writers of the age, and his name merits respect for the efforts which he made to inspire the monks of his monastery with a love of learning. Unfortunately for his repose, the bishop of Orleans asserted a right to the supreme control of his abbey; and, in resisting this claim, he excited the enmity of a party which set no bounds to its pride or its revenge. During the celebration of one of the festivals of the church at Tours, he was assailed by these ferocious antagonists; and, after having received several wounds, narrowly escaped with his life. Several of his attendants, less happy, fell, and bled to death, under the blows of the assassins.

* Dupin. Fleury.

† Cave. Mosheim speaks in terms of almost unqualified praise of this pontiff; but his elevation did him little good as a scholar.

‡ The following testimony to his learning, by William of Malmesbury, is curious and interesting: if all the historian says of him be true, he was not indeed far from being a magician:—

“Vicit scientia Ptolemæum in Astrolabio; Alkindum in astrorum interstitio; Julium Firmicum in fato. Ibi (in Hispania) quid cantus et volatus avium portendit didicit. Ibi excire tenues in inferno figuras: ibi postremo quicquid vel noxium vel salubre curiositas humana deprehendit. Nam de licitis artibus, arithmetica, musica, geometria, nihil attinet dicere, quas ita exhibuit, ut inferiores ingenio suo ostenderet, et magna industria revocaret in Galliam, omnino ibi jam pridem obsoletus. Abacum arte primus a Saracenis rapiens, regulas dedit, quæ a sudantibus abacistis vix intelliguntur.”—*Hist. Anglor.* lib. ii. Fabricius, tom. iii. p. 132.

The bishop proved that he was guiltless of any share in this affray, by offering to inflict condign punishment on its authors: but Abbon refused to gratify himself with a revenge of this kind; and was contented with urging, more strongly than ever, his opposition to the increasing authority of the bishops. This he effectually did in a synod, held some time after, at Saint Denys; but the strength of his argument was rendered suspicious by the disgraceful violence which his partisans now, on their side, exercised against the advocates of the episcopal order. Every effort was made to fix the guilt of this attack on the abbot himself; but he cleared himself from the charge, in an apology which displayed no little ability, and continued through life firmly to struggle against the many corruptions and follies of the times.

The celebrated author of the lives of the saints, Simeon Metaphrastes, was a native of Constantinople; and being sprung from a family of great rank, he early rose to some of the most important offices in the state. It was during a voyage to the isle of Crete, that he first imbibed that reverence for the early saints which led to the composition of his work. The weariness of the sea was pleasantly removed by the conversation of an old and venerable monk, who accompanied him in the passage: from him he learnt the particulars of the life of Theocthistes; and the impression thus made on his mind was sufficiently strong to induce him to repeat the story to the emperor. The monarch was not less interested than himself in the narrative, and at his request he was induced to commit it to writing more at large; but he complied with his master's desire in the spirit of a fabulist rather than in that of a biographer, and his memoirs, filled as they are with his own inventions or incredible legends, were so evidently paraphrastic, as to obtain for him the name of the Metaphrast, or paraphraser.

But the state of the human mind, at this period, can hardly be understood from the authors whose names

deserve mention : it must be learnt from the consideration of the events which occurred ; the characters which appeared on the great stage of action ; and the general spirit of the philosophy which was kept up as an apology for ignorance on the one side, and credulity on the other. The logic of Aristotle, when employed as an instrument by nervous intellects, may nurture self-dependence, but cannot weaken ; and imbecile minds cannot employ it, to any effect, even as an instrument of sophistry. But the characteristic of this age, in all its moral and intellectual relations, was weakness ; and while every species of knowledge was not merely subjected to the forms of logical syllogisms, but was sacrificed to the art on which they were constructed, the course of thought ran so shallow and faint, that the human spirit seemed scarcely awake to the call of either moral or natural truth. The power of the clergy was rapidly on the increase ; but it did not advance without strong opposition, and thence new methods were invented to effect purposes, which it had been long seen could not be attained by slothful and luxurious men, through the simple employment of legitimate means. Ceremonies without number, therefore, were now introduced ; every action of life was made to feel the thralldom of superstition ; and law itself lost its energy in her enervating fetters. England experienced the evil of this state of things in full force. The trial by fire or water was established as part of the law of the land ; the rules of ecclesiastical discipline, mingled as they were with useless niceties, had all the appearance of being invented to obviate the necessity of reason ; and the most zealous of the clergy, seeing the lamentable state of morals both in their own order and among the people, but not knowing by what means to effect a reformation, had recourse to experiments, which frequently left the condition of their countrymen worse than they found it. It was in this age that Saint Dunstan flourished ; and the whole history of that famous churchman tends to show that political craft, the off-

spring of ambition—superstition, the offspring of ignorance—and piety, the offspring of Christian faith, possessed nearly equal shares in the minds of those men who obtained, in the tenth century, the reputation of saints.

It is to this age belongs the fame of being the first in which bishops set the example of encouraging pluralities, and the popes canonised saints by an act of authority ; that bells were christened, and the most ignorant of men advanced to benefices at the mere will of the great. What, in short, the church did, savoured continually of ambition and avarice ; and whatever it gained, excited, in turn, the cupidity of the world. Thus acted upon both from within and without, it is little to be wondered at if it seemed converted from the living temple of Christ's body into a golden temple of Mammon.

CHAP. XVIII.

ROMAN PONTIFFS. — INVASION OF THE SARACENS. — THE NORMANS. — TRIAL BY ORDEAL. — HILDEBRAND. — HIS LIFE AND PONTIFICATE. — URBAN II. — CRUSADES. — STATE OF THE EAST.

A.D. 1003. SYLVESTER II. did little to distinguish himself after his elevation to the pontifical throne; but was succeeded by an ecclesiastic of much less reputation. This was John XVI., who, however, enjoyed the dignity only four months. The next pontiff assumed the same name, and was as little celebrated for any acts worthy of a place in history, if we except the not unsuccessful attempts he made to restore union between the church over which he presided and that of the East. The humanity of Sergius IV. made him beloved by the poor, but his pontificate was as barren of events as that of his predecessors. His death was followed by a fierce struggle for the vacant dignity between the partisans of Gregory, of whom little appears to be known, and the bishop of Porto, who, being the son of the count of Frescati, possessed vast influence over a large portion of the people of Rome. The contest terminated in his favour, and he took the name of Benedict VIII.; but, immediately after, was obliged to save himself by flight from the fury of the rival party. Henry, the reigning sovereign of Germany, afforded him the protection and support which he desired; and the troops of that monarch speedily restored him to his newly acquired dignity. In return for this benefit, he conferred the imperial crown on his champion, and had the satisfaction to see the turbulent spirit which had resisted his election wholly appeased. Scarcely, however, had he begun to enjoy the fruits of his exertions when Italy was once more thrown into consternation by the appearance of the Saracens, who, entering Tuscany, had

made themselves masters of a large tract of country, and threatened the neighbouring provinces with rapine and devastation. In this juncture Benedict summoned his bishops, and the allies of the church, to his side; and, placing himself among them, led the bands, thus hastily raised, to the relief of the conquered places. The Saracen prince had heard, in the histories of his predecessors, enough of Christian courage and determination under such circumstances, to dread the effects of their approach. Leaving his army, therefore, to meet the attack, he hastened to a place of safety; where he learned, in a few days, that of all he had led to the field not one had escaped the sword of the Christians; and that his queen, whom he had been obliged to leave behind, had been taken prisoner, and put to a violent death. Thus triumphant were the arms of Benedict; but his glory appears tarnished in the recital, that he appropriated to himself the golden ornaments and precious stones which had been taken from the bleeding head of the Saracen princess. Less offensive to the feelings, but far too much imbued with the fiery spirit of the world, is the record of his correspondence with the enraged infidel. Obeying the genius of oriental eloquence, the chief sent him a sack full of chestnuts, and bade the bearer add that the next season he would visit Italy with as many Saracens as he had sent nuts. In answer to this threat the pope sent him a sack full of millet, with the message, that if he visited Italy again, he would be met by as many warriors as there were grains of millet in the sack.

The Saracens were not the only enemies with whom Benedict had to contend in this martial manner. Italy had never been relinquished by the Greeks; and the slightest opportunity for aggression was readily seized on by their sovereigns. Benedict, like his predecessors, must have been contented to bear the injuries and insults thus inflicted with only a distant prospect of relief; but the arrival of Raoul, a Norman baron, whom the tyranny of his monarch had converted into an adven-

A.D.
1016.

turer, inspired the pontiff with new resolution ; and the Greeks, assailed by the daring little band which owned Raoul for its chief, hastily fled from their possessions. But, four years after this, Benedict found it necessary to visit Germany, in order to obtain fresh succours from the emperor ; and his journey was rendered important by its leading to the renewal of the imperial grant by which the popes were endowed with sovereign power and dignity.*

A. D.
1024. Benedict was succeeded by his brother, who governed the church nine years, as John XIX. He was, for a short time, driven from Rome by a violent faction ; but returned under the protection of the emperor Conrad, who had, some time before, received the imperial crown from his hands. At his death, so great was the influence enjoyed by the family of the Frescati, that his nephew, Theophylactes, a lad only twelve years old, was placed upon the chair said to have been occupied by the chief of the apostles, and possessing such virtue as to bestow infallibility and the height of spiritual power on whoever ascends it.† For twelve years was the Christian world scandalised by the rapidly succeeding follies and vices of Benedict IX. Disgusting as were the pride and ignorance of the boy, the gross licentiousness of the man was yet more intolerable ; and the people, unable to repress their indignation, at length drove him from the city. A new pontiff was then elected ; but Benedict returned, with a body of adherents too powerful to be resisted, and again ascended the throne. The scorn, however, of the world inspired him with a feeling of dread and shame ; and he was induced for a sum of money to resign his dignity, and retire into a station where his vices, though unchanged in their nature, might be more likely to earn from mankind the indulgent name of pleasures. His successor, Gregory VI., had many good qualities to recommend him ; but he appears to have shared in the purchase of the dignity to which he was appointed ; and this, to-

* Fleury. Basnage.

† Baronius, Annal. Eccles. an. 1033.

gether with the severity with which he began the reformation of abuses in the church, excited against him two very opposite classes of enemies: the one accusing him, and, as it seems, justly, of violating the most sacred canon of the church; the other hating him for depriving them of those opportunities of plunder which, under his predecessor, they had enjoyed to an unlimited extent. King Henry, of Germany, on visiting Italy, summoned a synod to meet at Sutri, and there called before him Gregory, Benedict, and Sylvester; the last two, notwithstanding what had occurred, still claiming the rank and title of supreme pontiff. Their claim was speedily annulled by the assembly; and Gregory, though at first confident of obtaining the ratification of his appointment, found himself obliged, before the conclusion of the enquiry, to confess that his election had been contrary to the canons. He was, accordingly, deposed; and such was the state of the Roman clergy, that not one of the body, it is said, could be chosen with any prospect of his being able to fulfil the duties of the pontificate. Suidger, a Saxon, and bishop of Bamberg, was, therefore, elected, and ascended the throne under the name of Clement II. He died a few months after his elevation, while accompanying the emperor on his way back to Germany; but his short pontificate is mentioned as forming an honourable exception to the general remark, that the popes of this period were wholly engaged either in advancing their own interests, or in indulging their unlawful passions.

The gross and daring Benedict, on receiving intelligence of the death of this excellent man, again presumed to ascend the pontifical chair; but, happily both for himself and for the church, and proving that his heart was not altogether unsusceptible of good, a conviction at last reached him, that he had broken laws which could not be neglected without involving the offender in danger the most terrible. This conviction moved him to seek the counsel of the venerable abbot Bartholemi; and he unfolded to that experienced ecclesi-

astic the state of his mind ; the fears which had arisen to alarm him ; the offences of which he had been guilty ; and the anxiety which he felt to relieve himself from the burthen under which his conscience was labouring. The abbot at once placed the axe to the root ; and declared that, as the very commencement of his penitence, he must instantly resign all pretence to the sacerdotal character, and all participation in its rights and privileges. This, and rarely has a nobler proof been given of sincerity, Benedict consented to do ; and voluntarily abdicating the pontifical dignity, he at once retired into a private station.*

Damasus II. was elevated to the throne through the influence of the emperor ; but he lived to enjoy his authority only three weeks. Six months passed before the vacant seat was again filled : Bruno was then elected in an assembly held at Worms, where, in the presence of the emperor, the great lords and bishops of Germany unanimously proclaimed him worthy of the pontifical dignity. Bruno, it is said, would have rejected the honour, but could only obtain by his resistance the condition, that he should not be obliged to accept the appointment if the call was not repeated by the people of Rome. His reputation, however, had already reached the ears of the Romans, and they rejoiced at the prospects which his united talents and virtues seemed to open before them. But ardour and firmness of mind were more characteristic of this eminent man, than those other virtues, which might have been more naturally looked for from his profession. The Norman bands, which had at first rendered signal service to the Italians, had by this time grown insolent from success, and regarded as their possessions the lands which they had been hired to deliver from the Greeks or the Saracens. Leo beheld their ravages with indignation ; and applied to the emperor for troops, to drive them from the district where they had concentrated their chief force. His application was answered by the im-

* Fleury. Dupin.

mediate despatch of an army to Italy ; and the pontiff not choosing to trust their conduct to any of his military allies, put himself at their head, and marched directly to the scene of action. The pacific nature of Leo's pastoral office did not prevent the Normans from trembling at his approach. His sword was as much dreaded as his anathema ; and they endeavoured, by offering the most conciliatory terms of peace, to ward off the expected blow. But the pope was confident of success ; and he judged, as a politician, that it would be well to humble such an enemy while he held him in his power. He made, however, a fearful mistake in the calculation of his strength : the Normans, driven to desperation, resolved upon defending themselves to the last ; and awaited the attack with the determination which had characterised their early displays of valour. Leo's troops found themselves opposed to men whose courage, thus aroused, proved invincible ; they were met, beaten back, pursued, and nearly all cut to pieces. The pontiff himself, having fled for refuge to a village in the neighbourhood, vainly endeavoured to fortify it against their approach : he was obliged to surrender ; and the Normans enjoyed the triumph of having vanquished a chief who came armed against them with the twofold power of the church and the empire. Greatly to their credit, they used their victory with temperance. Leo, though a prisoner, was treated not simply with respect, but with love and veneration ; and after having been kept with little restraint on his person or actions, about nine months at Beneventum, he was suffered, on making his wishes known, to return to Rome. A mortal disease had for some time sown its seeds in his frame ; and on reaching the capital he caused himself to be carried to the church of Saint Peter, where he died, soon after receiving the last sacraments.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that the see remained vacant a whole year after the death of Leo ; and that the chief cause of this was either, as is usually alleged, the absence of any candidate worthy of the dignity, or, as is more probable, that equal balancing of power between

rival factions, which prevented the favourites of either from daring to come forward. In this state of things, the emperor Henry was requested to select from the ecclesiastics of Germany some fit successor to the pontifical throne. A fresh opportunity was thus given the civil power of acquiring an important share in the management of the affairs of the church, and that species of opportunity which political philosophers ever value as the best; for the influence it bestowed was unopposed by those struggles, which, awakening attention to its progress, frequently end in raising up an effectual barrier to its influence. Henry's choice fell on his relation, the bishop of Eichstadt, who enjoyed the pontificate about two years, under the name of Victor II. He was succeeded by Stephen IX., abbot of Mount Cassino, who exhibited the strange, though not unfrequent, anomaly of great zeal for the correction of abuses, combined with the utmost unwillingness to sacrifice his own favourite objects to the general good. Long after his election to the pontificate, he continued to hold, contrary to all principle of right, the title and revenues of his former dignity. A violent sickness brought him to reflect on the inconsistency of his conduct, and he resigned his abbey; but his health was no sooner restored than he began to show that he utterly disregarded the sacrifice he had made while suffering under the apprehension of death. The revenues of the monastery and of its rich lands again found their way into his treasury; and the church beheld, with feelings of the highest indignation, simony punished by a man who was himself guilty of the basest avarice. He submitted, at length, to the force of public rebuke; and by his subsequent munificence appears to have wiped away the stain which had otherwise darkened his whole character. In his last sickness, he assembled his clergy and the people before him, and demanded of them a promise, that if he should die before the return of the sub-deacon, Hildebrand, then on a foreign embassy, they would not elect a successor to the chair of Saint Peter till that

eminent person should be present to give his advice on the subject. This is the first appearance of that celebrated man, whose actions occupy so conspicuous a page in the annals of the Roman church.

Hildebrand, on his return, found the city just recovering from the agitation into which it had been thrown by the hasty election of a pontiff, at the instance of the count of Frescati. With the promptness which distinguished him in all affairs of importance, he immediately took measures for supporting the views of the powerful and dissatisfied party, which had protested against the nomination of the new pope. It required little time to effect this purpose. Benedict, deserted and terrified, hastily resigned the throne, which was ascended by Gerard, archbishop of Florence, the favoured ally of Hildebrand and his colleagues. A synod was then summoned, for the purpose of considering how the church might be best protected for the future, against the troubles produced by a contested papacy. The character and opinions of the sub-deacon are conspicuous in the whole of this affair; and the following propositions, which exhibit the sum of the synod's decrees, afford a striking illustration of the general state of political opinion among the principal ecclesiastics of the day. It was enacted, first, "that the cardinals should have the chief share in the election of the pope; and that if any one should obtrude himself into the sacred office, without being unanimously and canonically elected by the cardinals, with the consent of the other orders, both of the clergy and the laity, he should not be regarded as an apostolic pope, but as an apostate: secondly, that at the death of a pope, or any other bishop, no seizure should be made on their estates, which should be reserved entire for their successors: thirdly, that no person should attend the mass when performed by a priest who was known to keep a concubine: fourthly, that canons and prebends should possess all things in common: fifthly, that the tenths and other offerings should be at the disposal of the bishops:

sixthly, that no person should be entitled to any church by the presentation of a layman : seventhly, that no person should assume the habit of a monk from the promise or expectation of being made an abbot : eighthly, that no priest should hold two churches at once : ninthly, that the clergy should not be judged by laymen. In the tenth section, it was stated, that no person should be allowed to obtain orders by simoniacal practices : in the eleventh, that no person should be suffered to marry a relation to the seventh generation : in the twelfth, that a married layman should, for keeping a concubine, be excommunicated ; and in the thirteenth, that laymen should not be advanced suddenly to ecclesiastical degrees, but should be tried for some considerable time after they had laid aside their secular habits." These decrees were followed by another of great importance, according to which it was ordered, that thenceforth no one should be allowed to retain his office in the church, who accepted ordination from a bishop guilty of simony : with respect to popes, that whosoever ascended the pontifical chair through bribery, or any other corrupt influence, should be treated as an apostate ; it being lawful, not only for the cardinal bishops to drive him from the throne, but for persons of inferior station in the church, and even for laymen of known piety, who were directed to call in the aid of the secular power to effect his expulsion.*

The laws thus established promised to have a very salutary influence on the state of the church ; but it is a remarkable fact, that while an act was passed prohibiting clergymen from holding more than one living, Nicholas himself, following the pernicious example of his predecessor, retained the dignity he possessed before his elevation to the papal chair ; and was thus, at the same time, bishop of both Florence and Rome. Such was the blindness of the age, or such the perfection of hypocrisy, that this infamous abuse of the power and possessions of the church was not resisted ; and Nicholas

* Dupin, vol. viii. Baronius. Basnage.

preserved his character as a true imitator of Christ — a fit successor of his apostle, by washing every day the feet of twelve poor mendicants.

One of the chief occurrences in this pontificate was the return of the Normans to allegiance. To prove their sincerity, they restored whatever they had seized from the church ; while the pontiff, on his part, made them a grant of Pozzuolo and Calabria, which subsequently led to the formation of the kingdom of Naples. Firmness and activity characterised the counsels of the Roman court, both in this and in other instances during the pontificate of Nicholas ; and we conjecture that this was owing, in a very important degree, to the presence of Hildebrand. On the death of Nicholas, which happened in the year 1061, the two factions which divided the church and people again mustered their forces ; and appeared fully determined to contend, with greater fierceness than ever, for the possession of the vacant chair. At the head of the one party was Hildebrand, who had for his supporters the most eminent of the Roman clergy ; at that of the other was the count of Frescati, with the great body of the nobility. The appeal which both made to the king of Germany afforded that monarch another opportunity of aggrandisement ; and he cautiously withheld his answer, till circumstances should better enable him to decide on the respective claims of the candidates for his support. But the clergy were little inclined to indulge this compromising conduct ; and at their appointment, the chair was filled by Anselm, bishop of Lucca, who assumed the name of Alexander II. When this was made known to the sovereign by the emissaries of the opposite faction, he expressed himself in strong terms of indignation at the disrespect which had been shown to his prerogative ; and nominated Cadalous, bishop of Parma, to the see which he declared to be still vacant. As Cadalous was aware of the state of things at Rome, he proceeded to take possession of his dignity, not bearing the cross, the emblem of his faith and charity, or ac-

accompanied by a band of laborious teachers of the Gospel, but armed, and attended by a strong detachment of troops, with which he immediately commenced the siege of Rome. His assault was successfully resisted, and the disputants finding their strength too equally balanced to admit of deciding the contest by force of arms, they consented to have their cause tried before an assembly of bishops at Mantua, where, after a fierce dispute, Alexander was declared legitimate pope. Cadalous, however, continued to urge his pretensions to the throne till death removed him from the scene of contention; and the forbearance which Alexander was obliged to show him, in obedience to the will of the emperor, afforded a new instance of the influence which the civil power possessed in the affairs of the church.

The pontificate of Alexander II. was distinguished by more than one important dispute. Simony, with all its attendant evils, had almost necessarily followed the addition of temporal power and grandeur to ecclesiastical dignity. Men of wealth and family were not likely to look with indifference on the splendid prizes daily gained by churchmen; and their cupidity being unchecked by the rules of self-mortification and humility which were once in force, they soon began to discover the means of obtaining a share in the rich spoils of prelatical warfare. It was when the corruptions of this nature were approaching maturity, that Peter of Florence forced his way to the bishopric of that city, by the exercise of a base and manifest bribery. The hatred of simony was very deeply implanted in the minds of the people and a large party of the clergy, but especially in those of the monks. It was a vice which even the most sensual could reprobate: it was one which, to the eye of the simplest devotee of the church, appeared in all its grossness and enormity; for it was more plainly than any other opposed to those qualities which had from the primitive times attracted the greatest veneration: its name carried with it recollections of infamy and imposture; it seemed to resist the

Holy Ghost and Divine Providence in their offices, and it set aside every principle on which ordination could be granted or received in the name of Christ. In the case of the bishop of Florence, the chief leader of the people was John Gualbert, who, supported by a numerous body of monks, fearlessly denounced the prelate as one with whom it was a sin to hold communion. Peter at first treated the rebukes of his opponent with haughty contempt, and despatched a party of his attendants to chastise the insolence of the monks and their leader, by burning the monastery to which they belonged. The sacrilegious barbarity with which this commission was exercised infuriated the people, and the whole district was in arms to avenge the sufferers in the cause of discipline. Had Alexander possessed the authority to which he pretended, he might at this time have exercised it with profit both to the church and to himself. But he was too little secure in the dignity he enjoyed to venture on risking it in a quarrel with so powerful a prelate as Peter ; and the monks in vain called upon him to punish the offence of which the bishop had been guilty. In this state of things, it was suddenly proposed that an appeal should be made to God himself by the ordeal of fire. The custom of the age, and the excited spirits of the monks, were both favourable to such a suggestion. Preparations, accordingly, were immediately made for the solemn ceremony which was to decide the guilt or innocence of the accused prelate. Multitudes, in the meanwhile, assembled from neighbouring parts to witness the trial, and the gates of the monastery where it was to take place were crowded with a motley assembly of men, women, and children, all apparently participating in the intense anxiety excited by the occasion.* The officers of the establishment now came forward, and two piles of wood, each ten feet long and five high, were erected, so as to form a narrow passage, which was strewed with well-dried and inflammable fuel. This being done, a monk named Peter was selected from the

* Baronius, *Annal. Eccles. an.* 1063,

fraternity to perform the duties of its champion ; and while the people and the clergy poured forth their loud and enthusiastic prayers, he sedately approached the altar, where, with the devotion of a man risking his life on the convictions of faith, he celebrated the holy communion. The piles were then lit : fresh and more vehement supplications, mingled with cries and wailings, filled the air as the flames burnt broadly and fiercely up ; but on Peter's presenting himself at the end of the fiery passage, and silence being obtained, two of the abbots who were present stated the design of the trial ; and Peter, lifting up his voice, exclaimed, " O Lord Jesus Christ, if Peter of Pavia have procured the see of Florence by simony, succour, and deliver me, in this terrible judgment of fire, as you did of old the three children in the furnace." He was now standing without his chasuble, but clad in all his other priestly ornaments ; and as soon as the attendants had pronounced Amen, at the conclusion of his prayer, he kissed his brethren, and desired them to ask the people how long they would have him remain in the fire. Their answer signified that he need only pass slowly into the midst of it ; and the heroic monk, making the sign of the cross, and bearing one in his hands, on which he kept his eyes immovably fixed, walked with naked feet into the burning alley, now glowing on all sides with intense heat. Awe and anxiety were visible on all faces, as he vanished from view, amid the smoke and flames of the now half-consumed wood ; but these feelings were quickly exchanged for others of a very different kind. Peter in a few minutes appeared at the other end of the passage, the fire gleaming harmlessly around him, slightly agitating his vest, but not injuring even the skin of his naked feet. The crowd pressed around him, with expressions of the profoundest reverence and gratitude ; and their admiration was still further excited when he stated that having as he was coming forth from the flames dropped a part of his dress, he had returned to pick it up, which he did without in-

curing any harm. Information of this singular transaction was forthwith despatched to the pope, who no longer endeavoured to resist the demands of the monks. The bishop of Florence was deposed, and Peter was rewarded for the part he had taken with the rank of cardinal ; such being the effect of the ordeal on the mind of the guilty prelate himself, that he willingly submitted to the judgment passed upon him, and became a member of the very monastery in which the question respecting his simoniacal practices had had its origin.

The dispute with king Henry on the right of investitures was one of a more general nature * ; and, together with the interference which was practised in respect to the claims of the duke of Normandy to the English crown, affords strong evidence that a spirit was at work which would sooner or later manifest itself in still bolder approaches to political power. That Alexander himself was not the author of these proceedings, is proved by the mildness of his disposition, his habits of retirement, and apparent freedom from those desires which usually prompt to such ambitious designs. His letters are highly interesting, and abound with proofs of his superiority both in mind and piety to the generality of his immediate predecessors. “ If the shepherds keep watch for their sheep in heat and cold, by day and by night, lest any should stray and perish, torn by ravenous beasts, how much labour, how much care, should we employ who are called shepherds of souls ? Let us strive, therefore, to show ourselves worthy of this charge of keeping the Lord’s sheep, lest in the day of judgment he punish us for those who have perished from our negligence, and we fall through that very dignity which now raises us above the rest of mankind.”† Equally to his honour is the sentiment he expresses in his letter to the bishops of Spain, on their conduct respecting the persecuted Jews. “ The report we have lately received,

* This was the commencement of the struggle between the Guelphs and Ghibelins, the names given respectively to the partisans of the pope and the emperor.

† Acta Concil. et Epist. Decret. Par. 1714.

that you have defended the Jews that dwell among you, from the attacks of those who are proceeding against the Saracens, and who would have killed them, has afforded us much satisfaction: for they, either from gross ignorance, or perhaps from base cupidity, have thereby sought to put those to death whom divine mercy may have predestined to eternal life."

The death of this amiable man occurred in the year 1073, and Hildebrand, whose influence in the government of the church had been long known and acknowledged, was immediately regarded as the legitimate successor to the papal throne. Some obscurity attends the early history of this celebrated pontiff: but it is generally believed that he was the son of a carpenter in Tuscany, who sent him, when very young, to receive his monastic education in the convent on Mount Aventine at Rome. His extraordinary talents and devotion quickly signalled him among the other youthful members of the fraternity; but, ardently bent on the acquisition of knowledge, he removed for some time to Clugni, in France, whence, after a course of diligent study, he returned to Rome. He now commenced the duties of a preacher,—an office for which he was eminently qualified, both by the extent of his learning and the ardent sincerity of his devotion. In this capacity he had the opportunity of greatly forwarding the interests of that cause to which he appears to have been attached from the earliest period of his career. His discourses, while they convinced the heads of the church of his power and energy, conciliated in his favour a large proportion of the people, and in a short time he was of sufficient consequence to be courted even by the pontiff himself. From Leo IX. he received an appointment to the abbacy of Saint Paul, in which monastery, at the time of his elevation almost ruined by the dissipation of its inmates, he gathered round him a fraternity distinguished for its discipline and prosperity. At the councils of Lyons and Tours, where he presided as pontifical legate, he exercised the office of ambassador with a vigour which convinced the enemies of his

church that he was not to be resisted by the usual arts of intrigue ; and soon after, his influence was shown in the election of Nicholas II., who owed the confirmation of his dignity, in defiance of the antipope Benedict IX., chiefly to the exertions of this powerful ally. As a reward for the zeal he had thus evinced in his favour, Nicholas made him archdeacon of Rome : and his wealth and interest were thus so considerably increased, that on the accession of Alexander II., in whose elevation he had the same share as in that of Nicholas, he became, in reality, possessed of the chief power of the papacy. By him were taught those counsels which emboldened the ministers of the church to question the rights which the powerful monarchs of the West had long struggled to assume : by him were wielded the weapons which were to break down the last remaining defences of the state against the ambition of men who had lost their spirituality in their anxiety to possess dominion. On the death of Alexander, his power was ripe and full-grown for the throne. Neither the clergy nor the people appear to have either dared or wished to resist his succession ; and he has himself left on record the remarkable tranquillity which reigned throughout Rome, as the consequence of this circumstance. “ Our Lord pope Alexander is dead,” says he, in the letters which he wrote on this occasion ; and his death hath fallen upon me*, and oppressed me grievously : for the Roman people, contrary to custom, remained quiet on receiving intelligence of his death, and put the reins of counsel so into our hands, that it was evidently the result of God’s foreseeing wisdom.” He then goes on to say, that having issued orders for three days’ prayer and fasting, which he directed in the exercise of the authority so given him till the election of a pontiff should take place, he was astonished and afflicted to hear himself proclaimed, in a violent tumult of the people, and during the very obsequies of Alexander, as

* “ *Mors ejus super me cecidit, et omnia viscera mea concutiens penitus conturbavit,*” is the strong expression he employs.

the new pope. Fear and trembling, he adds, in the language of the most afflicted of men, had taken hold of him ; and this weight of sorrow and anxiety compelled him for some days to keep his bed. " I am too weak," he says, " to write any farther account of my distress : " and the letter concludes with an earnest entreaty, that his friends and brethren might be told to assist him with their prayers.*

There is no just or sufficient reason to make us suspect the sincerity of Hildebrand's expressions on this occasion. Ambition, though inconsistent with true, spiritual Christianity, can exist without inconvenience in the modified warmth and light of its corrupted forms. Such, moreover, is the strange indecision of the human mind in moments of strong excitement, that the objects which have been sought with eagerness through years of toil, as often appear, when gained, to oppress by their weight, as others are found to disappoint by vanishing into air. But whatever were the feelings of Hildebrand, now Gregory VII., on ascending the pontifical throne, he speedily recovered the firmness which had hitherto characterised him. For this he had ample need. Though supported by the mass of the clergy, there were not wanting enemies to oppose his authority by secret machinations ; and he for some time had reason to fear that his unconfirmed election would be set aside by Henry IV. of Germany. But the prudent measures he employed in anticipating the objections of the sovereign, saved him from the danger of too early a contest with the state ; and he had time left to survey the circumstances by which he was surrounded, before plunging into the vortex of contention. Germany presented a scene of discord which a much less politic pontiff than Hildebrand might have regarded with feelings favourable to the most ambitious designs. France owned the sway of an infant, and was subjected to all the evils of misrule ; while England, prostrate under the feet of the Norman invader, and newly fettered with the chains of feudalism,

* *Acta Concil. Muratori, Annali d' Italia. Basnage, Hist. de l'Eglise.*

offered herself like a prize to be ransomed from the iron grasp of the ruthless warrior, if the church dare rise for her deliverance. Gregory, resolved on taking advantage of this condition of the principal European states, began his proceedings with the head of the empire, Henry, hated by his nobles, and resisted by several of the chief provinces of his dominions, was in no condition to oppose the pontiff's designs, which were speedily manifested by the determined manner in which he commenced the important struggle for the right of investitures. As a preparation for effecting this his long-formed design, he insisted on the removal of certain bishops from their dioceses, whom Henry had allowed to obtain the episcopal dignity by simoniacal practices. Among these was the archbishop of Milan, who, supported by the sovereign and the other Lombard prelates, defied the threats levelled against him by the Roman court. Finding this to be the case, Gregory excommunicated both the archbishop and his confederates; and shortly after directed the newly elected bishop of Lucca to refrain from accepting the rite of investiture from the king, till he should cease to hold communion with persons excommunicated by the Holy See. He next wrote to several other bishops and princes, stating the cause of his dispute with the monarch, but at the same time declaring that he still regarded him with every sentiment of affection.

The energy and perseverance with which Gregory pressed his attack on the authority of his royal adversary, were not to be resisted by a sovereign of Henry's character, and in the letter which the pontiff's united threats and assurances of friendship at length extorted from the vanquished prince, he declared that "Forasmuch as it was necessary that the empire and the papacy should contribute to each other's mutual support, it was most desirable they should be held together in one common bond of union: that he confessed he had not acted with due respect towards the Roman see, nor punished the guilty according to their deserts: that he

confessed his error, and hoped thereby to obtain pardon ; for that he had been led astray either by the levity natural to youth, by being too jealous of his authority, or by the bad advice of evil counsellors : that he had, through the one or the other of these causes, sinned against Heaven and the pope, not only by unlawfully seizing the revenues of the church, but also by holding communion with the simoniacal, and by selling benefices instead of protecting them as he ought : that he desired, for the future, the help of his authority ; the support of his aid and advice in reforming the churches, especially that of Milan ; and that he would, in return, render whatever services it lay in his power to afford for the defence of the Roman see." *

Gregory, fully aware of the advantage he had now gained, proclaimed the triumph of his policy in terms of unmeasured satisfaction. Never had such a letter, he said in his epistle to the new archbishop of Milan, been sent by either Henry or any other monarch to the pope of Rome. But Henry was not yet prepared to render that submission in action which he had expressed by his words : the offending archbishop of Milan continued to retain his title and dignity ; and when the pope, in a synod held soon after at Rome, expressed his intention to ordain Anselm bishop of Lucca, and Hugh bishop of Dia, he was opposed by the remonstrances of Henry's advocates, who stated that it would not be lawful for the pontiff to give them consecration till they had received investiture from their sovereign. In this the monarch was supported by the opinions of the people, who refused to acknowledge Anselm with a perseverance which proved their sense of the importance of the question at issue. Gregory next sought to effect by negotiation, what he thus found himself unable to secure by the management of his counsels at home. Henry was once more strongly appealed to : the bishops of Lombardy were denounced for persevering in their re-

* Dupin, vol. ix. p. 34. Muratori, *Annali d' Italia*. *Acta Concil. Mabillon, Act. Sanct. Ord. Benedict.*

bellion ; and their expulsion was insisted upon with equal earnestness as the necessity of purifying the church from simony and concubinage. The sovereign, it is said, listened with profound respect to these remonstrances of the legates, and replied, that he should willingly exert his power for the remedying of those abuses which had infected the purity of the ecclesiastical edifice ; but that, in regard to the bishops of Lombardy, he considered the pope had proceeded with too great severity, and had inflicted a punishment on the archbishop of Milan which he trusted would be forthwith annulled. To this he added a still plainer indication of his sentiments : the legates having expressed their desire to summon a council, he refused the necessary permission, supporting his prohibition on the pretence that the right of acting as legate in Germany pertained solely to the archbishop of Mayence, who had received his appointment from the preceding pope.

It is evident from the letters which Gregory wrote to Henry on the return of his legates, that he felt, at this period, the full difficulty of his situation. Instead of threatening the monarch with the censures of the church because of his seeming contumacy, he thanked him for the courtesy with which he had treated his messengers ; and in the place of repeating his anathemas against the archbishop of Milan, he offered to reconsider the subject of his deposition. But while he thus temperately addressed the king on the points immediately in dispute, he took care to assert his authority, and assail his enemies, by desiring him to compel the archbishop of Mayence, and three other of the principal bishops of Germany, to appear at Rome the following Lent ; there to give an account of their right to the episcopal dignity, and to receive the judgment he might find it necessary to pass upon their conduct. The policy of this proceeding is evident ; and it is impossible not to admire the skill with which Gregory, at the commencement of his career, estimated his strength, tempered his weapons, prepared himself for the attack he

was meditating, and studied the characters and position of those whom he was anxious to overcome. With his ardent ambition, but not possessing the same subtlety, another man would have been found precipitating himself at once into the arena, and periling the future success of his schemes on a single experiment.

But, with a boldness not diminished by caution, he now began to insist on that rule of discipline which his own stern principles of ecclesiastical purity, and a keen foresight of its vast importance to his plans of aggrandisement, rendered of the utmost consequence in his counsels. The assembly to which the German prelates had been convened, was held at Rome with great solemnity; and a decree followed its consultations, which was levelled with equal force against the marriage of the clergy and the guilt of simony. It was evident from the manner in which Gregory had proceeded, that he intended to follow up this measure with no trembling or uncertain hand; and the clergy both of Italy, and of almost every country in Europe, immediately assumed an attitude of defiance. Considering the subject in its natural bearings, the design of the pontiff appears in the light of a bold and arbitrary invasion of human liberty: of an attempt made on the consciences of the clergy unauthorised by Scripture, and prompted only by a dark, close ambition. But after all that has been said upon this subject, the candid enquirer will not fail to observe, that the design of Gregory ought to be considered in intimate connection with the circumstances under which it was formed; and that, when so considered, it admits of a fair and strong apology. The clergy of his time were sunk low by the indulgence of sensuality; they retained no signs of the sanctity which once separated them from the rest of mankind, more by the graces they exhibited in their conduct, than by the peculiarity of the garments that clothed their persons. In this state of things, it was evident that, unless some great effort were made, the church, if not religion itself, must soon sink under the burden which its secular accompaniments obliged it to

bear. The most obvious remedy was the immediate separation of the clergy from the world, by the institution of positive laws striking at the root of the evil by which they were tempted. Had the mind of Gregory been as calm as it was acute and enterprising, he would have seen, that to attempt the cure of disorders introduced through the sensuality of a large class of men by arbitrary rules, was to incite an opposition, in the heat of which vice would find new and stimulating nourishment. But the most resolute are not always the wisest politicians ; and Gregory may have credit given him for a sincere and virtuous desire to diminish the power of sensuality, though, by a mistake common to his age, he employed an outward and direct force, when the remedy required was an inward application, slow in its effects, but sure and renovating.

The rage with which the clergy received the decree affords a too striking indication of the state of discipline. Concubinage and simony appeared to be regarded as legalised by the long continuance of evil indulgence ; and the bishops, especially those of Germany and Italy, stood foremost in the ranks of those who resisted the attempt to repress them. Had these prelates not been supported by the king, their resistance would soon have vanished ; but Henry, though prevented by his war with the Saxons from acting according to his inclinations, secretly favoured their opposition ; and the Saxons were no sooner conquered, than he began to evince a coldness towards Gregory, which plainly proved with what little sincerity he had professed his readiness to forward his designs. The death of the archbishop of Milan furnished an occasion for new contentions. Henry appointed a successor to the see, as if no circumstance had happened to render it necessary to consult with Gregory on the subject ; while the latter considered that the rightful successor to the dignity was the prelate whom he had nominated on deposing the late archbishop.* On hearing what had

* The following was his epistle —

“ To Tibald, a clerk of Milan.

“ We have been informed by some mutual friends, that you desire and seek our friendship, which we, indeed, freely offer you unsought ; and now

taken place, he wrote to the newly appointed prelate, and to the clergy of his diocese, calling upon them in the most urgent manner to refrain from proceeding with the ordination : another letter was despatched at the same time to king Henry, whom he as earnestly exhorted to separate himself from those who were lying under sentence of excommunication, and to take advantage, while he might, of the absolution which he now offered him. But the monarch was not to be deterred from the course he had taken ; and Gregory found himself surrounded by enemies in Rome itself, who had sufficient power and influence to dare his utmost vengeance. Cencio, the son of Alberic, prefect of the city, had, by a series of un-

that it is sought, most readily give you, if, in those things which are of God, we shall find you justly willing to accede to our admonitions — nay, to the divine will. But in the cause you have undertaken, you have added the necessity of a heavy burden to our ordinary cares, and have involved yourself in a struggle, in which it does not become you to be found ; in which business, if it would be dangerous for us to pass the limits of equity, so also would it be to stop short of the rules of justice, and to dissemble in silence. You cannot be ignorant that another person, still living, was appointed before you to the episcopal see which you occupy ; and, therefore, neither the apostolic nor the canon law permits either you, or any one else, to take that place till, for just reasons, the former occupant be deposed. For what ought we to say of him who, while with unlawful desire he seeks the honour of that see, which justice denies him, hath not refrained from invading and devastating by sacrilegious force, and by arms ; whom the guilt and ambition, which he could not be induced to forsake, hath brought to the just punishment of thy condemnation ? Concerning him who is with us, and whom we recognise as certainly elected to this same church, we are at present taking counsel ; but why he ought to be rejected, we cannot in anywise conceive. Wherefore, our conscience bearing witness, we admonish thee with the sincerest affection to present thyself, if you love the church, and desire to deliver both her and thyself from the peril of confusion, at the synod which, with God's permission, we have determined to hold in the first week of the approaching Lent ; or, if you so wish, you may seek the apostolic seat, and our presence before the synod." He then assures him that if, on examination, he should be found to have a fairer claim to the dignity than he who had been elected, he should receive his support ; and to prevent his indulging any fear respecting his personal favour, he sends him a safe conduct, confirmed by the duchess Beatrice and the countess Matilda. Having given these assurances, he continues : — " But in the mean time we command you, on the part of the Omnipotent God, and by the apostolic authority of the blessed Peter, that you presume not to receive any degree in the sacred orders, knowing that if you now refuse us obedience, it will repent you when thou shalt see thyself sunk, by thy precipitation, there, whence, however you may desire it, you will not be able to escape. If, therefore, they who perceive not the things of God, suggest, and persuade thee to follow, other counsels, showing how much help the king can afford thee — how much power there is in thy nobility — how much assistance in thy citizens, — think it not safe to believe them, considering what is written in the Scripture ; ' Cursed is the man who placeth his trust in man.' And bearing this in mind — that the virtue of kings and emperors, and the universal endeavours of mortals, against the apostolic laws, and

lawful acts, brought upon himself the indignation of the pontiff, who excommunicated him, and placed him in confinement.* The faction, however, of which he was the head, speedily restored him to liberty; and he lost no time in seeking revenge on the pontiff.† His scheme was ripe for execution on Christmas day; and while Gregory was engaged in the solemn performance of the midnight mass, a band of soldiers rushed into the church, seized him without any respect to the sacredness of his office or of the place, and, after having inflicted several injuries on his person, conveyed him to his castle. This daring outrage was, in a few minutes, made known throughout the city. To the solemn stillness which had before reigned, broken only by the voice of devotion, succeeded the loud sound of the trumpet summoning to arms: the people who had thronged the churches rushed with terror and lamentation into the public squares; and universal consternation prevailed. It speaks powerfully in favour of Gregory, that the opinion of the multitudes thus gathered together, was one of enthusiastic veneration for his person: in as brief a space as the insurgents had employed to seize him, they broke through all opposition to his deliverance; and he returned to the sacred service of the night with feelings not less calculated to deepen his own emotions, than to inflame on his behalf the passions of the populace. Cencio, when the morning dawned, beheld his castle in ruins; and only narrowly escaped falling a sacrifice, with his wife and children, to the indignation excited against him.

the omnipotence of God, are but as a spark and stubble; be not, therefore, urged by the instigation or the confidence of any one, against divine and apostolic authority, to become rebellious and pertinacious.”^a

* “Fuit itaque quidam vir in urbe, perditionis filius, omnium hominum sceleratissimus et iniquissimus, cujus quidem memoria aërem ipsum commaculat,” is the description given of Cencio, by the author of Gregory’s Life. Mabillon, Sanct. Ord. Benedict.

† Muratori, Annali d’ Italia, an. 1075. Cencio was, it appears, instigated by the advice of Guibert, archbishop of Ravenna, who had aspired to the papacy, as well as by his own personal resentment. Gregory imposed on him, as a penance, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but he died before the end of the year.

^a Acta Concil. et Epist. Decret. t. vi. p. i. page 1330. Par. 1714.

A. D. 1076. At length the period arrived for bringing the dispute between the ecclesiastical and civil power to an open decision. Gregory finding that Henry was determined to establish Tebald in the archbishopric of Milan, and that he had also conferred the churches of Fermo and Spoleti on his favourites, without in any way consulting his wishes on the subject, wrote to him in plain terms, that if he did not refrain from these obnoxious proceedings, he must expect shortly to be excluded from the communion of the faithful. The monarch received this intimation with haughty contempt, and summoning a diet at Worms, gathered around him the numerous enemies of Gregory to be found among the German prelates. Such was the boldness of Henry, and the determined hostility of his bishops, that a forged document, purporting to contain a decree of deposition passed by the cardinals at Rome, against the pope, was received with acclamations; and the assembly concluded its deliberations by declaring him no longer head of the church.* This measure Henry followed up by despatching his emissaries into Italy, to make known the decree which had been passed, and to incite the people to receive it as a legitimate act. The messenger who undertook to convey the instrument to Rome was a clerk of Parma; and he arrived in the capital just at the time

* Hildebrand, named Gregory, is the first who, without our consent, contrary to the will of the Roman emperor established by God, contrary to the custom of former times, contrary to the most ancient laws, has invaded the papacy; he desires to do whatever enters his head, whether it be lawful or unlawful, *per fas nefasque*. He is an apostate monk who bastardises sacred theology by new doctrines; accommodates the Holy Scriptures, by false and forced interpretations, to his own affairs; destroys the concord of the church; mingles things sacred and profane, and pollutes the one and the other; opens his ears to devils, to the slanders of the most infamous; and is himself witness, judge, accuser, and party. He separates husbands and wives; prefers the unchaste to the pure; and encourages every species of licentiousness to honourable marriage. He incites the people to mutiny against their priests; the multitude against their bishops; and wishes to make it believed that no one is rightly consecrated, who has not received the priesthood from him or his creatures. He deceives the vulgar by a pretended religion, by a fraud; and in a little coterie of women he treats of the most sacred mysteries of religion, dissolves the law of God, which respects both the papacy and the empire. He is guilty of lese majesté, human and divine; for he desires to deprive a consecrated emperor, a very good prince, of both his life and his dominions. For these causes, the emperor, the bishops, the senate, and Christian people, declare him deposed, and desire to leave no longer the flock of Christ in the keeping of such a wolf.—BAYLE, art. GREG. VII. *note*.

when a numerous council was sitting in the church of the Lateran. Unawed by the power or solemnity of the assembly, he presented himself before the pope as he sat enthroned in the midst of his cardinals and prelates ; and presenting the king's decree, summoned him in a loud voice to descend the apostolic chair. Murmurs of astonishment burst from all present, as he pronounced his daring message ; and the bishop of Porto, rising from his seat, ordered him to be seized by the guards : the command was promptly obeyed ; and had it not been for the exertions of Gregory, the priest would have perished under their ready hands.

It was now evident, that unless measures were taken to resist the proceedings of Henry, the church must speedily suffer, in the person of its chief, the most dangerous invasions of its rights and independence. Gregory, therefore, lost no time in concerting his plans of defence. In this he was greatly aided by the duchess Beatrice, and her daughter, the countess Matilda. These princesses, the near relatives of Henry, were venerated for their virtues ; and the latter possessed, by her union with the duke of Tuscany, a degree of influence which made her friendship more important than that of any other of the Italian potentates. Gregory, happily for his cause, had long enjoyed her interest ; and secure of support from this quarter in resisting the tyrannical conduct of his rival, he resolved to pursue the cause prompted by his ardour and ambition. The aspect of affairs appeared to harmonise with the pontiff's intentions ; and several of the most powerful princes soon after joined his party. Among these were Bertold, duke of Carinthia ; and Guelpho, duke of Bavaria, and son of Azzo, the second marquis of Este. Thus aided, Gregory urged his claims to obedience with all the policy and eloquence of which he was so distinguished a master. It required but a short time to convince Henry that he had been guilty of a temerity, the consequences of which it would now demand the utmost caution, and a vast sacrifice of pride and dignity,

to countervail. The princes who had united themselves against him, even began their proceedings by providing for his deposition ; sentence of excommunication was publicly proclaimed against him throughout his dominions ; and these violent measures would, there is little doubt, have been immediately put in execution, had not the monarch hastened to acknowledge his error, and supplicated for time to effect an accommodation. This was with difficulty allowed him ; and the pontiff continued to pursue his original intention of holding a synod in Germany the ensuing spring.

A.D. 1077. The sacred season of Christmas was scarcely past, when Gregory commenced his journey into the north. A winter of more than common severity had nearly rendered the roads impassable ; and the hardiest travellers trembled at the idea of attempting the mountain fastnesses at such a period. But the pontiff, undeterred by danger or difficulty, fearlessly followed his guides through the snows ; and, with the countess Matilda for his companion in this arduous route, at length reached the town of Vercelli. On arriving at this place, he learnt, to his astonishment, that Henry himself had also entered Piedmont. As he had no means of ascertaining the object of the monarch's precipitate approach, he wisely resolved to pause till information could be gained respecting his intentions. The castle of Canossa sul Reggiano offered him a safe retreat in this emergency ; and in that strong fortress, he and his companion, with their respective followers, shut themselves up, in order to await the return of the emissaries they had despatched to Henry. But instead of his being found in the guise of a powerful enemy, he soon after arrived at the fortress, humble and penitent, and exhibiting all the marks of deep sorrow. It was now the hour of triumph for Gregory, for the church, for the papacy. The suppliant sovereign, admitted within the second wall of the fortress, unattended, divested of every token of royalty, and clothed in a coarse woollen garment, was there left to wander with naked feet, till the haughty pontiff

should choose to admit him to an audience. For three days and nights he had thus to endure the excessive cold of the season with scarcely any shelter or nourishment.* On the morning of the fourth day, Gregory summoned him to his presence. The monarch obeyed the call, and prostrating himself at the feet of the pontiff, implored his pardon. Gregory then solemnly protested his own innocence of the simoniacal practices with which he had been charged, and demanded of Henry, if he could assert his freedom from guilt in the same manner. The king wisely evaded the question; but his penitence and humility could not be denied the mercy which they sought from the supreme minister of Christ's church. Gregory, therefore, accorded him absolution,—the boon which it might be supposed the supplicant was most anxious to obtain as an offending child of the church; but as a king he could obtain no mark of favour with the cautious pontiff. He was told, that as he had been formally deposed by the sentence of the ecclesiastical authorities, and was no longer regarded as a sovereign by his people, he must await the reconsideration of his case in a diet of the empire, before any answer could be given to his petitions on this subject.†

These occurrences are naturally contemplated with astonishment: but Henry was not the first monarch that the present pope had excommunicated. Philip of France had, three years before, provoked a similar punish-

* Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, an. 1077.

† Gregory thus describes this extraordinary event in one of his own letters:—*Quod cum diu multis consultationibus differentes acriter eum de suis excessibus per omnes qui intercurrerant nuntios redargueremus, tandem semetipsum nihil hostile aut temerarium ostentans, ad oppidum Canusii, in quo morati sumus, cum paucis advenit: ibique per triduum ante portam deposito omni regio cultu miserabiliter, utpote discalceatus, et laneis indutus, persistens, non prius cum multo fletu apostolicæ miserationis auxilium et consolationem implorare destitit, quam omnes qui ibi aderant, et ad quos rumor ille pervenit, ad tantam pietatem et compassionis misericordiam movit; ut pro eo multis precibus et lacrymis intercedentes, omnes quidem insolitam nostræ mentis duritiam mirarentur nonnulli vero in nobis non apostolicæ severitatis gravitatem, sed quasi tyrannicæ feritatis crudelitatem esse clamarent. Denique instantia compunctionis ejus, et tanta omnium qui ibi aderant supplicatione devicti, tandem eum relaxato anathematis vinculo in communionis gratiam et sinum sanctæ matris ecclesiæ recepimus, acceptis ab eo securitatibus quæ inferius scriptæ sunt.*—*Acta Concil.*

ment ; and Gregory then, as now, stated, in direct terms, the principles on which he acted. “ Those,” said he, in a letter to the bishop of Mentz, “ who consider that a king cannot lawfully be excommunicated, are utterly unworthy of a reply. But let them examine the apostles and the fathers ; let them see what Saint Peter laid down as a rule in the ordination of Clement, respecting those who should be at enmity with the bishop. ‘ Let no one eat with them,’ says the apostle. Let them consider why pope Zachary deposed the king of France, and freed the nation from the oath of fidelity it had taken : let them know that Saint Gregory, when giving certain privileges to various churches, not only declared those kings and princes excommunicated, who should oppose them, but deprived them of their dignities : let them also consider in what manner Saint Ambrose behaved towards the emperor Theodosius. But if, indeed, the Holy See has received from God the power of judging spiritual things, why shall it not judge temporal things ? The difference between the royal dignity and the episcopal is manifest in their origin : the former springs from pride ; the latter is the institution of divine goodness.”

The whole of these arguments have been carefully canvassed, and it is answered, that the alleged authority of Clement exists only in a supposititious letter of that eminent father to Saint James, and in which even the excommunication spoken of is not that by which the pope pretended to deprive princes of their temporal power, but that only alluded to by Saint Paul, and intended to serve as a part of spiritual discipline : that with regard to the example of Zachary, he did not in reality depose king Childeric, but only received the appeals of the French, who sought to effect that object ; and that, not because of Childeric’s irreligion, but simply on account of his incapacity : that the privileges alluded to were those granted by Gregory the Great to the hospital of Autun ; but that, while many authors doubt the authenticity of this part of the document altogether, others

contend that the passage cited was only written by way of threat ; that Saint Ambrose never pretended to deprive the emperor Theodosius of temporal power ; and that, as for Gregory's other arguments, they prove too much ; for that, if those who are appointed to judge of spiritual things have also the right to judge of temporal things, there would no longer be any other judges but bishops ; and that if the temporal power were only established by human pride, religion would be able to destroy it.*

It can hardly, however, be supposed that Gregory could write with the force and earnestness he employed on this occasion, and be conscious, all the time, that the principles, and even the documents, on which his arguments were founded had no truth or validity. Ambition even to act with the daring and perseverance which he exhibited in his conduct, requires a certain degree of conviction that it has truth and justice on its side. Without this, it may form plots, and, by a mixture of desperate experiments and guilty deeds, may partially effect its designs ; but, whatever may be thought of the tendency of Gregory's intentions, there is an earnestness in his expressions, a lofty, direct assumption of authority in his proceedings, which are rarely, perhaps, if ever reached, except when the mind enjoys a large share of confidence in the fairness of its efforts.

The nobility and clergy of Lombardy were greatly enraged on learning what had taken place between Henry and the pontiff at Canossa. They felt that their interests had been sacrificed by the pusillanimity of their sovereign ; and, obeying the impulse of the moment, they resolved on proclaiming young Conrad, the son of Henry, as rightful possessor of the throne. Gregory, in the mean time, was pronounced a simonist, a tyrant, and a homicide ; and Italy presented a scene of disorder scarcely exceeded in the worst times of the empire.

* In the *Acta Concil.* the letter of Gregory occupies a considerable space, and is entitled *An Epistle to the German Prelates on the Affairs of Henry.* — *Epist.* lib. iv. n. 12.

At length, Henry succeeded, by means of the archbishop of Ravenna, in bringing over several of the bishops to his side, and in a short time found himself in a situation to reassume, notwithstanding the hostility of the pope, the ensigns of royalty. It has even been said that he formed the design of drawing Gregory into a snare, and of making him his prisoner, but that he was prevented by the timely interference of the countess Matilda. However this may be, he had ample occupation given him at the approach of spring. The German princes and bishops, assembled in the diet which had been summoned for the purpose, formally confirmed the sentence of his deposition, and proved their determination to establish the decree by immediately electing Rodolph duke of Suabia as his successor. It might have been expected that Gregory would gladly assent to this measure: but he had the policy to pause before he gave his decision upon the subject, and the two kings were left to wage a war which cost Italy and Germany the blood of their bravest children. A new candidate for the sovereignty in the mean time appeared on the stage. This was the celebrated Robert Guiscard, duke of Puglia, whose original hostility to the pontiff, and subsequent victories, occupy many pages of contemporary history. The penetrating eye of Gregory, however, discovered qualities in this prince which convinced him that his bravery might be employed with advantage to the church at the present period. After finding, therefore, that he could neither extinguish the torch of civil war which had been lit, nor subdue Henry to his will, he again published his anathemas against that monarch*, and prepared measures for defending himself against the storm which, it was evident, politic as he was, must soon burst around him. His first step was to acknowledge Rodolph legitimate sovereign of Italy and Ger-

* "Exercise your judgment quickly against this Henry," are the words of the pontiff, in an address to the German princes and bishops; "that all men may know that it is not by chance, but by your power, that he fell and is confounded; would that it may be unto repentance, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord!"—*Vita Greg. VII.*, *Mabillon*, *Act. Ord. Ben.*

many. But Henry met this proceeding by causing the archbishop of Ravenna to be declared pope; and by making a greater effort than ever to meet his rival in the field. To the astonishment and consternation of the papal party, he succeeded so well in this design, that, in a bloody battle fought on the 4th of October, 1080, he completely routed the army of Rodolph, who left the field mortally wounded.*

No time was lost by the conqueror in taking advantage of this success. At the head of a triumphant army, he no longer feared either the anathemas of Gregory, or the forces he had raised. As he proceeded, the cities opened their gates to receive him; the bishops and princes of the several districts made no attempt to resist his approach; and even the countess Matilda found herself obliged to acknowledge his power. Gregory now appealed to Robert Guiscard; but that prince was too much engaged with his own boundless hopes of conquest in the East, to be able to render him any efficient help; and the army of Henry was allowed to appear before the gates of Rome. The unhealthiness of the season, however, delivered the city from immediate assault, and Henry and his troops were obliged to retire into Tuscany. Early in the spring of the following year (1082), he again led his forces to the capital. This second attempt proved little more successful than the former, the appearance of a new pretender to the throne obliging the monarch to hasten to Germany. Thus the year passed away without producing any material alteration in the relative position of the belligerents. The succeeding summer, however, gave the accustomed signal for renewing hostilities; and Henry's army, headed by the antipope as general of the forces, might have soon reduced the city to the last extremities. But at this period of the contest, he con-

* Muratori relates this circumstance on the authority of Donizone, *Anali d'Italia*. The ardour with which the countess Matilda advocated the cause of Gregory, and accompanied him in the most difficult periods of his career, has not been unobserved by the enemies of the pontiff (*Bayle*, art. *Gregory VII.*); but her conduct was the ordinary result of strong and superstitious devotion.

ceived it more prudent to attempt a compromise than to press his success to that dangerous point to which a final victory might hurry him. Gregory was venerated by the greater part of the Christian world as its appointed and sacred champion, and an indignity inflicted on his person or office would have been productive of ruinous consequences, at this era of the world, to even the best esteemed and most powerful of monarchs. The principal people of Rome readily furthered the wishes of Henry on this subject ; and it was finally determined that a council should be summoned by the pope for the purpose of reconsidering the question of Henry's deposition. On the 20th of November the assembly held its sitting with all the form and regularity which could be expected in so disturbed a season. Gregory for some time resisted all the entreaties of those who were present in favour of Henry. At length he was induced to refrain from publishing a new sentence of excommunication. This was the only concession he could be persuaded to make ; nor was even this granted without a strong internal struggle with himself, and so powerful an appeal to the feelings of the auditory on the persecutions which the church had suffered, that all eyes were filled with tears. To those who entreated him to receive Henry without requiring from him any act of submission, he replied in the strongest terms of refusal ; and the nobles, who appeared resolved to use their utmost endeavours to effect a reconciliation, and obtain the restoration of the monarch to his throne and dignity, found all their arguments treated with disdain.

A. D. 1084. The firm determination of Gregory overthrew the plans which had been formed by Henry and his allies in the city ; and the latter, seeing that they could not obtain the rewards which had been promised them by the sovereign, in case of success, quickly reassumed their station as the natural supports of the pontifical throne. But Henry was now too well furnished with supplies to allow his cause to suffer while gold could procure him aid. The necessitous Romans, therefore, were soon

brought back to his interests, and in the spring of the year, the royal army took unresisted possession of the city. Gregory shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo ; and, while closely besieged in that fortress, heard that Henry had received the imperial crown from the hands of the antipope Guibert. The speedy return of Robert Guiscard from Greece saved the pontiff from the misery which he had too much reason to expect, should he fall into the power of two such inveterate enemies as his rival in the papal dignity and the thrice excommunicated monarch. Henry retreated at the approach of this redoubtable warrior, and the pope came forth from his fortress to behold the triumphal entry of his deliverer and half Rome in flames.

Both parties now evinced some willingness to renew the consideration of the subject in dispute. Several meetings accordingly took place, and the year 1085 was expended in vain endeavours at pacification. A fiercer spirit, indeed, appeared to be generated in the conferences than had before existed. Excommunications and anathemas were poured forth from the papal party with an exuberance of wrathful expressions ; and these were answered, on the other side, by counter-excommunications, which the legates of the antipope, who had assumed the name of Clement III., pretended they had the same authority to pronounce against the allies of Gregory. Such being the state of things, the pontiff saw little hope of bringing about a reconciliation on those terms for which he felt it necessary to his dignity to contend. Tumult and distress, in the meantime, filled every corner of the ecclesiastical states ; and the people began to express their discontent in terms of no equivocal signification. The day was past when to suffer with their spiritual head would have been regarded as a crown of glory. Gregory knew this ; and, perceiving that he could no longer remain safe at Rome, he retired first to Mount Cassino, and then to Salerno. But his career had reached its appointed extent. Soon after his arrival at the latter place, he was attacked by a mortal

disease ; and on the 24th of May, 1085, this celebrated man breathed his last. Just before his death he was asked if he would not remit the various sentences of excommunication which he had passed. He said, " Yes, excepting that against Henry, the antipope, and the principal fomenters of the schism ;" adding, " I have been honest, and die an exile."

The character of Gregory has been described in the most opposite manner. On the one side, he is represented as a saint, uniting to the greatest purity of conduct the most powerful mind, and the clearest apprehension of human affairs and interests : on the other, he is made to appear as a minister of evil, originally obtruded into the church to disturb its tranquillity, and availing himself of his authority, only to gratify a daring and lawless ambition. That no part of the picture might be left untouched by this dark colouring, he is accused of having committed the very vices to establish laws against which was the great object of his life. The first decrees he passed were levelled at simony, and he is said to have been deeply involved in its practice : concubinage he declared to be in all cases a full and sufficient cause for the deposition of a minister of Christ ; and his own connection with the countess Matilda has been set forth as meriting no fairer title. But his history affords us ample means for explaining the difficulties which the contradictions of adverse writers have thrown in our way. He was too sincere and powerful a champion of the cause he espoused, not to be venerated with enthusiasm by his party ; and he was too bold, too sincere, too passionate, not to be hated by his opponents. The extravagance of the eulogies, and the rancour of the censures, with which his name has been treated ought not to surprise us ; and candour will content itself with a simple appeal to the circumstances under which he acted, where his actions are of a doubtful tendency. Hildebrand lived at a period when the light of truth had to pierce through the thick darkness of superstition, and when even the most acute and learned could hardly

fail to miss some of her rays, coming as they did through that dense medium. The received and general interpretation of truth, moreover, is at all times rather appealed to, than truth itself: it is this which forms the standard of doctrine and of morals; by this the many are governed, and the few judge and reason. They who pass beyond it to the prime principle itself, are the very elect of these few, and are certainly not to be looked for among those who willingly expose themselves to the toils and temptations of ambition. Considering Hildebrand, therefore, among the other actors of his age, he should not be condemned with extraordinary severity, though it should be found that, in the course which he adopted, he followed not the pure spiritual rule of uncorrupted truth, but that modified or deformed image which had been set up in her place. But it was indeed the great purpose of his life to establish the maxims received through this medium. He acknowledged them as embodying the means of universal good; as based on the everlasting intentions of Heaven; and the enthusiasm natural to his character taught him that to bring the world into subjection to a system hedged round by such principles would be to fulfil the designs of the Almighty, and to save mankind from ruin. With this for a governing motive to all his actions, he began his career: this prompted him to advise measures of the boldest kind to the mild and timid Alexander; by this he was impelled, at the commencement of his pontificate, to throw off every species of disguise, and let the world see at once what it was his purpose to effect. When resisted, he found in this the assurance which such a course demanded; and the ambition, the self-seeking, the fierceness,—whatever, in short, was merely personal, whatever made him a tyrant,—was sheltered under the engrossing idea, that the dignity of religion and the church could only be asserted by the profound humiliation of the civil power.

This consideration ought at least to temper the judgments passed upon the career of Hildebrand; and to

save him from the imputation of having been little more than a reckless tyrant. But what were the grand objects which he proposed to secure by the daring experiments he made? The first was, to clear the church of two base and odious sources of corruption; the second was, to reassert its right to independence, its claim to dispense its own spiritual offices and commissions without the intervention of a political master. Simony is one of the foulest crimes of which a churchman can be guilty; and the indulgence shown it, under one pretence or other, in wealthy establishments, is one of the main causes of their weakness and corruption. Had Hildebrand been really infected with the vices with which he was charged, he would yet have deserved well of the universal church, for having attempted to purge it of this destructive crime: his violence would have had a better apology than could be urged in almost any other instance of ecclesiastical severity; and he would have merited as a churchman, if not as a simple Christian, a high place among its benefactors. In respect to the design he formed of freeing the church from the necessity of appealing to the civil power whenever a bishop was to be consecrated, care should be taken not to confound this object with those which regard only the aggrandisement of the church in its wealth or splendour. But such is the perverseness or the blindness of many on this subject, that, while they heap up their epithets of abuse on Gregory for thus truly asserting the dignity of the church, they give unequivocal marks of approbation to those who nourish it in an ambition fatal to its strength and purity. Gregory beheld monarchs sunk in sensuality, or the slaves, by their position, of political expediency, making use of the church as a huge depository of bribes and rewards: he saw the most important of its trusts bestowed on those who had not even the shadow of a claim to the elevation, but that which they won by servility, by their assiduous devotion to the business of the court, or through the persuasion of patrons, unworthy themselves of confidence. He knew

that wide and populous districts were thereby placed under men who had neither experience nor spirituality to recommend them ; and who, only anxious to obtain preferment, that they might enjoy wealth and luxury, would care as little about the flock of Christ, as if to guard and instruct it formed no part of the obligations appended to their office. Nor did he fail to see that the evil could not stop here. When the heads of the church rise through corrupt influence, the presence of the same evil principle will be manifest in the elevation of the inferior members ; and thus the whole body of the priesthood will be infected with worldly-mindedness, pride, and sensuality. To take that power out of the hand of the temporal sovereign, which had been so badly exercised, was the design of Gregory : and had he not pursued his purpose by means which were unauthorised by the Gospel ; had he only uprightly contended that monarchs ought not to have the unlimited power of placing Christ's heritage under whom they will ; that the church ought not to be surprised by the sudden elevation of men, whom it has had no means of examining and proving, he would have ennobled himself in the eyes of every true member of the Christian church ; and his labours, crowned with modified success, might have saved religion from many of the deepest wounds it has suffered at the hands of kings and princes.

But Hildebrand, while seeking to deliver the church from the danger of an improper interference with its appointments, forgot that the very independence for which he contended was founded on principles of the purest spirituality. Instead of contenting himself with simply acting on the defensive, which is all that the Gospel allows its ministers to do, he became an assailant, and, forgetting or willingly blinding himself to the truth, that the civil magistrate is not less ordained by God than the rulers of the church, he usurped a right to chastise, which neither the nature of things nor the constitution of states, nor the scriptures, authorized him to assume. This error, so fatal to his success, so op-

posed to the holy humility proper to his office, and so destructive in its future effects, was the fruitful parent of those multiplied ills which attended his pontificate. On this the simoniacal prelates whom he summoned to his synods rested the whole strength of their resistance ; by this the emperor was provided with reasons for defying his claims which the world could not answer ; and to this every opponent of the church has appealed, when bringing forth Hildebrand as a by-word on the ambition and tyranny of churchmen.

Of the moral character of this celebrated pontiff, the accounts given are as various as those of his public actions : but we hesitate not in rejecting the reports of his enemies on this subject, as inconsistent with the whole tenour of his life. He began his career as a monk ; and the severity of his virtue had sufficient influence to reform a monastery, till then the abode of the grossest licentiousness. When in the world, his ardent mind was intensely and unceasingly occupied with designs which, if they were mistaken ones, had yet a grandeur in them not to be comprehended by an enervated sensualist ; while the determined manner in which he opposed the vices of the clergy must by necessity have prevented him from indulging them in his own person. The sum of his errors is soon cast up. He had an insatiable thirst for power, and his ambition was rendered fierce by contention : he began by struggling for the independence of the church ; but, dazzled by the hope of exalting it to supreme as well as independent authority, he invaded the rights of nations ; confounded the power which belongs only to the universal church of Christ, with that which pertains to its particular divisions ; and, endeavouring to bring all things under the yoke of his despotism, wilfully forgot that, if kings ought not to have the power of sending improper men into the sanctuary, or of keeping out those who would most efficiently perform the work of Christ, priests ought to be contented with the power which they enjoy by their prayers at the altar, by their communion with the great head of

the church, and by the promises which they possess of especial grace and protection. In other respects, Gregory seems to have been free from any gross stain on his character. His letters abound in sentiments exalted, dignified, and stirring; and we would far rather trust to them as a mirror of his character, than to the gloomy and heated language of controversy and declamation.

The antipope Guibert made a vigorous effort to establish himself in his usurped dignity on the death of Gregory; but the Roman cardinals and princes treated his claims with contempt, and nominated Didier, abbot of Cassino, to the vacant chair. It was not, however, till after a year had passed in mutual contention, that the abbot could be prevailed on to accept the papacy. A few months terminated his reign, and, brief as was the period between his elevation and his death, it was distracted by the resistance of the antipope, and the clamours of the Roman populace and a strong party of the clergy. Victor III. was succeeded by Urban II., who owed his election to the still paramount influence of the countess Matilda. Guibert, however, continued to oppose the proceedings of the electors, nor was he expelled the city till the misfortunes of Henry deprived him of support. Urban, shortly after his election, held a council at Rome, in which he confirmed the decrees of his predecessor; and this was succeeded by several others, the great object of which was to establish the laws against simony and concubinage. But in 1095 he summoned at Placentia one of the most numerous councils which had ever been witnessed in the West: such was the concourse of bishops and princes, with their respective followers, to this famous assembly, that the deliberations had to be carried on in the open air. The subjects debated were of an importance proportionable to the extent and solemnity of the meeting; and it was now for the first time enquired by the assembled representatives of the church, how the suffering Christians of the East might be delivered from the dire oppression of the Saracens.

A.D.

1086

to

1088.

A. D.
1095. Urban, in furtherance of the grand design thus brought forward, proceeded from Placentia into France, and in the month of November assembled at Clermont, in Auvergne, a council superior even in numbers and splendour to that which had been held on the other side of the Alps. The subject of a crusade against the infidels was now to be solemnly considered, as demanding the attention of the whole Christian world. Gregory VII. had already used his interest to arouse the princes of the West to undertake the deliverance of their distant brethren ; but he was prevented from pursuing the work by the dangers in which he found himself involved by attempts which more intimately concerned his safety and the dignity of the church. It was reserved, therefore, for Urban to bring this vast and wonderful design distinctly into view ; and in this he was greatly aided by the circumstances of the age. The warlike spirit which led the countless tribes of the North to make the conquest of more fruitful regions, had neither sunk under the enervating temptations of southern luxuries, nor been repressed by the influences of the Gospel. Adventure and conquest fostered it with strong food ; and the splendour of the prize with which victory was crowned made war magnificent, and prepared it to accompany civilisation as the minister of wealth and dominion. The benignity of Christian principles cannot be really understood, much less obeyed, unless the religion itself be received in its fulness and purity : but Europe had for centuries been adopting successive modifications of the great evangelical law of charity ; and, by the time that Charlemagne was crowned emperor of the West, the heads of the church could not fail to perceive that, through the ambition of princes and the pride of their nobles, a spirit was generated which, if not subdued to the gospel, must speedily render its precepts of no effect to the improvement of society. Chivalry was instituted, under the auspices of the best minds and the most generous hearts that the age furnished : devout feeling and Christian faith were not wanting in the establish-

ment of its principles ; and it was sent forth into the world the personification of honour enlightened and sanctified. The increasing power of the popes, to which it was so greatly indebted for its institution, and the close mingling of every religious claim with an additional one on the part of superstition, created new demands upon the energies of this young and brilliant offspring of the church : they were at all times willingly met ; and, gathering strength by exercise, it now seemed to stand in full panoply, awaiting the call to some high duty worthy of its zeal and strength.

The condition of the Christians, in those parts of the East which had fallen under the yoke of the Saracens, had varied with the character of the chiefs to whom they were subject. Many large branches of the community, broken off by the controversies of Nestorius and Eutyches, were, we have seen, early transplanted into the provinces held by the Moslem. There they flourished and increased ; and, whether the infidel was rendered tolerant by the knowledge that they were separatists from the church, or that they were less disposed than the orthodox to contend for their rights and customs, they suffered few outrages on their liberty. But Jerusalem and the surrounding territory had ever been contemplated by devout Christians with profound reverence, and from a very early period the more enthusiastic of their number had not feared to encounter the perils and difficulties of a journey to the sacred cradle of their faith, from the remotest bounds of the north. The poorest and the wealthiest were to be seen habited in the pilgrim's garb : youth rejoiced to expend its courage and its strength in traversing the route that led to the doubly consecrated mount of salvation ; and age felt that it could nowhere lay aside its burdens and its sorrows so well as at the sepulchre of Christ. On the capture of Jerusalem by the Saracens, the pilgrim found the difficulties of his undertaking greatly increased. The pride and jealousy of the conquerors guarded every corner of the city ; and those holy retreats where he

had formerly poured out his soul in unrestrained prayer and confession were now closed against him, or could only be entered on the payment of a sum greater than many could command. To the followers of Mahomet, Jerusalem was not less sacred than to those of Christ. They believed that it was in its holy precincts that heaven revealed to their prophet its sublimest mysteries ; and thus the bitterness of religious rivalry was added to the other sources of contempt with which they regarded the Christians. Though they suffered them, therefore, to enter the city, and perform their devotions at the sepulchre, this permission was granted with evident reluctance. The revenue derived from the tax paid by the pilgrims, and the traffic carried on through their means, afforded one great reason for their admitting them within gates which they would have so gladly closed against all but worshippers of the prophet ; the cautious spirit which distinguished the first of their chiefs was another. It was clearly seen that, if the tomb of Christ had been fortified against all approach, the whole of Christendom, — not only the Greek empire, but the farthest provinces of the West, — would have poured forth their armies to vindicate the right of his servants. By these considerations, the masters of Jerusalem were induced to allow the ingress and egress of those numerous bands of pilgrims who were seen gathering from time to time around the walls of the city : but the caprice of tyranny often overcomes its policy, and the pilgrims were exposed to frequent abuse and personal injury. Sometimes, also, the tribute demanded was so exorbitant, that very few could pay it ; and numbers of poor distressed supplicants, weighed down by fatigue and anxiety, were left to die on the ground, when at the very point of realising all those ardent hopes which had brought them through so many perils.

It would have been a disgrace to Christian nations, at any period of the world, to suffer a barbarous people thus to oppose them in an act of devotion. A pilgrimage to Jerusalem was deemed necessary to the perfection

of a holy life ; and, in judging of the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the crusades, we have nothing to do with the question whether such an act could in any way be acceptable to God or not. It was then regarded as highly pleasing in the eye of the Redeemer ; and Christian kings and prelates were bound to see that those whom they ruled and taught were not prevented by the tyranny of a foreign power from continuing a practice which their belief had sanctified, and the custom of ages rendered essential, in many instances, to peace of conscience. Unfortunately, however, the mode in which the crusades were undertaken, and the objects of their supporters, will not allow of our defending them on these simple principles. Instead of being confined to the only legitimate purpose for which they could have been commenced, they were carried on with the design of making conquests ; and Christian chivalry, which might, according to the belief of the period, have been nobly employed in claiming a privilege that violated no law of nations, stained the brightness of its armour in blood unlawfully and vainly shed.

At the council of Clermont appeared the first preacher of the crusades, Peter the Hermit, a man remarkable for his energy and piety, and who to his enthusiasm must have united no slight intellectual endowments. His words penetrated the hearts of men like a divine signal ; and it was mainly owing to the excitement he had created, that the town of Clermont presented on this occasion, so grand a scene of chivalry and devotion. The early sittings of this celebrated assembly were employed in the settlement of measures intended to effect a reform in the manners of the clergy, and to cleanse the church of those corruptions which had been introduced by the laxity allowed under the government of former pontiffs. On the meeting of the council for the tenth time, the concourse of people anxious to witness or take part in its proceedings was so great, that it was found necessary to hold the session in the grand square of the city. There, on a throne erected for the occasion, and sur-

rounded by his cardinals, Urban sat prepared to summon the representatives of all the great Christian powers to promise their co-operation in the deliverance of the holy sepulchre. At his side stood the hermit Peter; and, before a word fell from the mouth of any one else, the venerable man set forth, in the plain but fervid language of experience and conviction, the calamitous condition of those who, in obedience to their faith and their conscience, had sought an asylum near the sepulchre of their Lord. Deep was the impression which his words made on the minds of the assembled multitudes, and while they were still glowing with wonder and indignation at the scenes he had depicted, Urban began to address them on the same high and all-engrossing theme. "A people without God, the son of the Egyptian bond-woman," he exclaimed, "possesses the cradle of our faith and the country of our Lord. That city of the King of kings, whence the light of truth has been diffused among the nations, is made the ministrress of the basest superstition; that tomb where death was vanquished by its victim, that tomb whence first arose the sun of the resurrection, has been polluted by those who will only rise again to serve for fuel to the fires of hell. Even now has the triumphant imposture spread the darkness of its errors over the richest provinces of the East. Antioch, Ephesus, Nice, have become the prey of the Mussulmans; the shores of the Hellespont are planted with their standards, and the Christian countries of Europe await with trembling expectation their descent upon our shores. If the Lord himself, then, rousing his children, and arming them to battle, stop not their triumphant march, what nation, what kingdom, will be able to close against them the ports of the West?" As the pontiff proceeded, his language grew more powerful and passionate; he brought to his aid the sublime figures of Scripture, and the arguments suggested by all the associations most venerable to the human heart. "Warriors," he exclaimed, "you who have been so ready to adopt any occa-

sion for strife, behold a war sacred and legitimate ! If you triumph, the benedictions of Heaven and the kingdoms of Asia will be your reward ; if you fall, you will have the glory of dying in the same place as Jesus Christ ; and God will not forget that you were engaged in his warfare. What base affections, what low enervating sentiments, can keep you from joining in this holy cause ? Soldiers of God ! henceforth be deaf to all but the lamentations of Zion ; break asunder all the ties of earth, and remember what the Lord hath said : ‘ He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me ; and whosoever shall forsake his house, or his father, or mother, or wife, or children, or heritage, for my sake, shall be rewarded an hundred-fold, and shall possess everlasting life.’ ” Scarcely had these solemn words fallen from the lips of the pontiff, when the whole assembly, as actuated by a single spirit, burst forth into one loud shout : “ It is the will of God ! It is the will of God ! ” — “ Yes, it is indeed the will of God,” rejoined Urban : “ to-day are fulfilled the words of Christ, who has promised to be in the midst of his people met together in his name : it is he who hath inspired you with the sentiment you have pronounced : let it be your war-cry : and let it proclaim among the nations the presence of the God of Hosts.” Then, holding up the cross, he continued, “ It is Christ himself who, having left the tomb, now presents to you his cross : it shall be the sign raised among the nations appointed to gather together the dispersed children of Israel : carry it then on your shoulders, and on your breasts ; let it shine upon your arms and on your standards : it will become the promise of victory or the palm of martyrdom ; it will remind you, without ceasing, that Jesus Christ died for you, and that you also ought to die for him.” A general confession of sins followed, and absolution having been pronounced, the bishop of Puy demanded the privilege of being admitted the first soldier of the cross. The zeal of this prelate was followed by many others, and a large concourse of the principal barons

and knights of France swore before the pontiff to avenge the cause of their Saviour. Urban, on the other hand, promised to those who assumed the cross the full remission of their sins ; put their persons, their families, and possessions, under the protection of the church, and of St. Peter and St. Paul ; and pronounced an anathema against all who should do aught to injure or afflict them.*

The excitement which prevailed on this extraordinary occasion, did not pass away with the hour that gave it birth. Throughout France nothing was to be heard but prayers for the deliverance of Jerusalem : every where might be seen crowds of devout candidates for the honour of the cross, pressing to the churches and soliciting the benediction of the pope. Urban, unwearied in his labours, passed rapidly from one quarter of the country to the other, and the zeal of the people was never left unanswered. "Receive this sign," he said to each suppliant that prostrated himself before him ; "receive it, as the image of the death and passion of the Saviour of the world, that neither sin nor misfortune may reach you in your journey, and that you may return happier and far better than you set out."

We have not space to enter into any further detail respecting the crusades. Urban excused himself from accompanying the expedition, on the plea that the cares of his pontificate prohibited his departure from Europe ; and it is with no little astonishment that we find it could ever have entered the mind of even the most enthusiastic, that the sovereign pontiff—he on whom, as the church was then constituted, rested the responsibility of its government—could, under any circumstances, have left his important charge, to employ his time and experience on a perilous expedition to the most distant countries. But the situation of Urban was sufficiently difficult to convince those who might otherwise have rejected any consideration of this kind, that to have left his seat

* Michaud, *Hist. des Croisades*, tom. i.

unoccupied at such a period would have been to expose Christendom to a worse degree of anarchy than it had ever yet experienced. The conflict between the church and the temporal power was at its height. Germany still upheld its monarch in rebellion against his spiritual father. Philip I. of France was excommunicated by the pontiff in the council of Clermont; and while he had thus two powerful princes for his declared foes, he saw Rome itself, the sacred capital of that dominion which seemed bounded only by the boundaries of Christendom, in the hands of his rival Guibert. It was not till towards the conclusion of his pontificate that he obtained undisputed possession of the dignity. He then held several synods; one, especially, at Bari, in 1098, in which the controversy with the Greeks respecting the procession of the Holy Ghost was renewed by Anselm; and another at Rome, in 1099, in which he renewed and confirmed the canons published in the council of Placentia. He died shortly after the meeting of this assembly, leaving behind him the reputation of having closely followed in the steps of Hildebrand as a defender of the papal supremacy, and of having carried into effect, by the institution of the crusades, one of the greatest designs ever conceived by the loftiest or the most ambitious intellects.

While these events were taking place in Europe, the empire in the East was still rapidly verging towards the last stage of decline. But the ambition of its patriarchs and princes remained undiminished. Eustathius, who ascended the patriarchal throne after Sergius, employed the treasure of both the church and the state to purchase permission from Rome to assume the title of universal bishop of the East. John XIX. appeared strongly inclined, it is said, to accept the proffered bribe, but was prevented by the clamours of the Roman clergy. The ambitious patriarch lived few years to lament his disappointment. He was succeeded by a monk named Alexis, who governed the church of Constantinople during seventeen years, which embraced the re-

mainder of the reign of Basil and Constantine, and the reigns of Romanus Argyrus and Michael the Thessalonian ; the former of whom, a man of many virtues, perished by the infamous arts of his empress, the abandoned Zoe, who immediately after espoused Michael. This prince reigned about seven years, and Zoe at his death found herself constrained to adopt his nephew as partner in the government of the empire. His treason enabled her to humble him ; and, his eyes having been put out, he spent the rest of his life a prisoner in a monastery. Constantine Monomachus was then called from exile, and, consenting to marry Zoe, was elevated to the throne. Alexis died soon after the accession of this emperor, and his house being searched, it was found to contain a vast mass of gold, which the monarch, it is said, did not scruple to appropriate.*

The new patriarch, Michael Cerularius, made himself conspicuous by starting a question, the agitation of which was fruitful in all the usual consequences of religious dispute. This controversy was commenced in a letter which he wrote, in his own name, and in that of Leo, archbishop of Acridia and Bulgaria, to the bishop of Trani, and which he also directed him to communicate to the pontiff and the church in the West at large. The main points of complaint in this epistle were directed against the use of unleavened bread by the Latins in the celebration of the Eucharist ; against the practice of fasting on the Saturdays in Lent ; against the alleged vice of eating the blood of beasts and things strangled ; and against their neglecting to sing the alleluiah in Lent. In order to prove the determination with which he intended to follow up his charge, he forthwith ordered the churches of the Latins in Constantinople to

* The wealth of the prelates at this period is also shown by the anecdote related of the archbishop of Thessalonica. The emperor Michael, having heard from the clergy of that place that the archbishop would not pay them their pensions, directed him forthwith to satisfy their claims. He refused, and the emperor immediately forced open his treasures, in which he found 3300 pounds of gold. Having paid the clergy, he gave what remained of this sum to the poor, and, expelling the archbishop from the diocese, kept him a prisoner in the country. Fleury, liv. 59. n. 18.

be shut up, and expelled the monks from their monasteries. Cardinal Humbert was the first of the Roman ecclesiastics who became acquainted with these proceedings, and he hastened to communicate the letter to pope Leo. The pontiff lost no time in replying to the epistle; and he wisely and temperately observed, that the diversity of ceremonies in churches was no lawful or sufficient reason for their separation. Both Michael and the emperor admitted the propriety of this maxim, and, at their invitation, the pontiff sent his legates to Constantinople, to hold a conference on the points in dispute. On their arrival in the imperial capital, the controversy was carried on with fresh vigour by Humbert, the chief representative of the Roman church on this occasion, and Nicetas Pectoratus, a monk of Studia, and the principal ally of the patriarch. This latter writer stated, ‘ that those who make use of unleavened bread are still under the shadow of the law; that they assist at the altar of the Jews, and eat not that bread which is *supersubstantial* or *consubstantial* to us; because unleavened bread is dead bread, having no virtue or efficacy in it: that it is not such bread as is perfect, complete, and composed of three things, figuring out to us the body of Christ, which three things are the leaven, the meal, and the water, and which answer respectively to the spirit, the water, and the blood spoken of by Christ; that Jesus Christ made use of leavened bread at the institution of the Eucharist, because he established it on the 13th and not on the 14th day of the month, that is, before the feast of unleavened bread.” He argued in a similar manner on the custom of fasting on Saturdays, which he declared to be contrary to the usage of the apostolic times. Humbert replied in a strain of bitter invective to the observations of Nicetas, and declared that he had perverted Scripture by his interpretations. This reply he followed up by an act of authority, which shows how powerful an influence the Roman pontiff possessed over the minds of the Greeks, notwithstanding all the resistance of the patri-

archs and the emperors. Proceeding with his associates to the monastery of which Nicetas was an inmate, he there, in the presence of the monarch, obliged him to retract his opinions, and cast the writings in which they were contained into the fire. Nicetas did not resist, but the next day sought the legates at their own residence, and there repeated his recantation.

It was expected that Michael Cerularius would himself have been induced by this example of his zealous ally to seek peace with the pontiff. But he remained firm to his purpose ; and Humbert, finding it impossible to weaken his resolution, had recourse to the always ready instruments of pontifical authority, excommunication and anathemas. Enraged at this proceeding, the patriarch, it is said, formed the intention of drawing the legates into the hands of the populace, whom he had violently excited against them, but was prevented from fulfilling his design by the prudence of the emperor. Humbert and his colleagues justified their conduct by sending the monarch a true copy of the excommunication, which Cerularius was accused of having falsified. This had its due effect, and Constantinople was thrown into general confusion by the dispute which immediately followed between the emperor and the patriarch. The death of the former alone saved Michael from perpetual disgrace and exile. Theodora Porphyrogenita, the successor to the throne, was unable or unwilling to resist his opinions. This was also the case with Michael Straticus, in whose reign he acquired a great addition to his wealth and authority, and at length possessed sufficient influence with the people to make the aged sovereign resign his sceptre into the hands of Isaac Comnenus. This event took place in the year 1057 ; and the Greek and Latin churches continued from that period in a state of fierce and open hostility. The new emperor and the patriarch retained their esteem for each other but a short time. Michael set no bounds to his pride and ambition. He affected both in his style and manners an equality with the sovereign ; and the emperor, having heard him openly declare

that there was no difference between sacerdotal and imperial power, resolved upon making a bold attempt to relieve himself from the rivalry of so dangerous a subject. A small band of soldiers accordingly were despatched to a church in the suburbs in which Michael was officiating; and in a few hours not only the patriarch himself, but his friends and his family, were conveyed on board a ship bound for a distant port. Michael died in time to save the emperor from the hazardous experiment of publicly deposing him. The people of Constantinople venerated him for his learning and abilities, and, no doubt, for many of those very qualities which rendered him dangerous and obnoxious to the monarch.

The reigns of the emperors between the last-mentioned sovereign and Alexius, who was declared emperor in the year 1081, may be passed over in our necessarily rapid narrative, with the brief statement that, the Seljouk Turks, during this period, were every day gathering fresh strength; that they were in vain opposed by the emperor Romanus Diogenes, whom the empress Eudocia had espoused and elevated to the throne as the champion of her people; and that the accession of Alexius was attended with tumults which bathed the streets of Constantinople with the blood of many of her citizens. But this prince had scarcely seated himself on the throne, when tidings reached the capital that Robert Guiscard was traversing the Grecian seas with a fleet which had on board the choicest warriors of Europe. In this season of terror, and while he was encamped with his army on the shores of the Bosphorus, he sent messengers to his brother, Isaac Comnenus, who shared with him the imperial power, to direct him to convert the treasures of the church into specie, for the payment of the troops. Isaac trembled at undertaking a task which threatened such fearful results; but the circumstances of the time admitted not of delay, and having assembled a council of bishops in the church of St. Sophia, he communicated to them the necessity of the case in a manner which left them no alternative but obedience. Alexius,

on his return, promised them an ample restitution, when the troubles which then afflicted the empire should be overcome. No sooner, however, had he relieved himself and his people from the ruin which seemed impending over them, than he received an epistle from Urban, notifying the preparations which had been made for an expedition against the Saracens, and intimating the duty which would be imposed upon him to provide for their safe and prosperous passage through his dominions. Alexius was too good a politician not to expect with dread the arrival of a vast tumultuous army like that which he knew would march under the standards of the fierce nobles of the north. Nor was he without fear that Bohemond, the valiant son of Robert Guiscard, who had already evinced his signal prowess in the siege of Durazzo, might be tempted by the dazzling bribe of an imperial crown to stop his troops midway, and satiate his ambition before he satisfied the ardour of his devotion. Some of these apprehensions were fully realised. At the very first arrival of the crusaders in Constantinople, they behaved with insulting barbarity, and exercised upon the inhabitants and their property every species of violence. But Alexius cautiously concealed his feelings, and the crusaders continued their route into Syria. Of the miseries they encountered; of the fortitude they displayed, or of the battles they fought, it is not necessary to speak in this place: but, after innumerable calamities, and a sacrifice of human life greater than that demanded by war in its most ruthless forms, Jerusalem became the reward of their united valour, ambition, and devotion.

In examining the state of religion at this period, we find the lines drawn broad and deep by which it was characterised. The disputes between Hildebrand and the emperor on the one hand, and the crusades on the other, afford many collective views of the struggles and the superstitions — of the virtues enamoured of reigning errors, and of the errors that made themselves thrones, which so remarkably distinguished the eleventh century.

Berenger, a monk of Tours, and archdeacon of Angers, was the only ecclesiastic who rendered himself remarkable by reviving, at this time, the controversies of the former age. He began his labours as a disputant on the subject of infant baptism, but soon became involved in the more difficult and at that time dangerous controversy respecting the Eucharist. His opinions were speedily made known to Leo IX., and the attention of that pontiff was subsequently more readily roused by the information he received, that William duke of Normandy had allowed him to reside and teach in his dominions. In a public conference, however, which the duke directed to be held for the examination of his opinions, Berenger was said to be defeated; and it might have been expected that no more would be heard of his supposed heresy. But so far was Berenger himself from allowing that his doctrines had been fairly confuted, that he wrote to the clergy of Chartres, and distinctly accused the whole Roman church, with the pope at its head, of the very crime of heresy with which he had himself been charged. In a council which the pope soon after held at Vercelli, the works of Johannes Scotus Erigena, on which Berenger founded his opinions, were condemned and burnt; Berenger himself was also condemned; and king Henry of France summoned a synod at Paris, principally for the purpose of examining the disputed doctrines. Berenger, in writing to Ascelin, a monk of Bec, thus speaks on the subject:—
“ You regard John Scot as a heretic, but you commit an injustice thereby, which I pray God to pardon you. If I found in his writings any thing which is not clear and correct, I would at once condemn it. But I can discover nothing in them which is not taught by the fathers. With regard to the doctrine which you teach with Paschasius, that is, that, in the sacrament of the altar, the substance of the bread absolutely subsists no longer; it is a notion not only contrary to good sense, and absurd, but incompatible with the Gospel and with St. Paul.”

Berenger, in this and other passages of his writings,

plainly teaches the simple and original doctrine of the spiritual presence only of Christ in the communion of his body and blood. He employed in the defence of his opinions great learning, the subtleties of metaphysics, and all the apparatus of scholastic logic. But in proportion to the reasonableness of his doctrine and the force of his arguments, were the majority of the clergy disposed to treat him with fierce intolerance ; and in the council of Paris, held in October, 1050, it was declared, that as he had refused to attend, all the army of France, with the priests at their head, would pursue him and his accomplices, till they either made them retreat, or punished their crime with death. In the year 1355, a council was held at Tours, under the direction of Hildebrand, who was at that time legate in France. Berenger appears to have either compromised or concealed his opinions on this occasion ; but, however he modified them, or whatever weakness he manifested, it is certain that he immediately afterwards republished his original sentiments, and continued to do so till 1059, when Nicholas II. summoned him to attend a council at Rome, convened for the purpose of condemning his doctrines anew. Many of the most eminent ecclesiastics of the age had been engaged in controversy with him, from his first appearance before the world. Among these the chief was Lanfranc ; and this eminent prelate, together with Alberic, a monk of Mount Cassino, took upon themselves the important charge of confuting his supposed errors before the prelates assembled to judge his cause. Berenger, either convinced by the reasonings of his opponents, or terrified by the authority and power of the synod, again professed himself willing to retract his opinions, and not only signed a profession of faith contradicting the doctrines for which he had so strongly contended, but with his own hands threw into the fire both the writings he had published himself, and the famous work of Scotus Erigena.

It was now supposed that no further disorder could take place in the church from the agitation of Berenger's

heterodox opinions ; but, to the astonishment of the world, and certainly little to the credit of his candour or honesty, he had no sooner passed the Alps than he began to labour again in diffusing the doctrines which he had thus, apparently from his conscience, condemned. The endeavour to defend the conduct of those whose opinions deserve approbation, simply because they agree with us in sentiment, has produced many dangerous perversions of moral truth ; and the falsehood of which Berenger, it seems, was really guilty, must be left where and as it is found, a broad and dark spot on the reputation of a man of genius. To the attempts made by some of the French bishops to repress his opinions by the decrees of provincial synods, he paid no attention ; and had not the Roman pontiff been induced, by the importance of the dispute, to notice his proceedings, the doctrines he preached might, by the courage and energy he now evinced, have been established in a large portion of the church. This would have laid the foundation of a general reform long before it was meditated as a thing to be attempted, and Christendom would have been spared several centuries of gloom and degradation. Gregory VII. had already, we have seen, performed the part of a judge on Berenger. He had since then possessed ample means of examining the state of the dispute, and the consequences it might be expected to produce. But he had not come to the same conclusion on the subject as the council of Paris. Instead of determining to pursue the heresiarch with the sword, he summoned him to a synod at Rome, in which he tolerantly allowed him to defend his opinions for three days together against the supporters of the established doctrines. At the close of the disputation Berenger once more professed himself ready to renounce the doctrines for which he had not only endured so many labours, but forfeited his character for honesty, to support. The part which Hildebrand took in this affair, though prudent and charitable, was regarded with suspicion by his colleagues in the government of

the church. There is, indeed, some reason to believe that his strong and acute intellect had by its own natural energy secretly thrown off a part, at least, of the burden which the enervated minds of his contemporaries rejoiced to bear. But whatever were his opinions of the merits of Berenger's case, that remarkable man had no sooner signed his recantation than the pontiff presented him with an epistle to the archbishop of Tours and the bishop of Angers, the purport of which was, that he had taken Berenger under his especial protection; that they were to defend him against his enemy the count of Angers; and that whoever injured him or his property should be punished with excommunication. Gregory, by his liberality, afforded his opponents the opportunity of charging him with heresy; and even his friends considered that he had evinced far too great a degree of tolerance towards so inveterate a heretic. Berenger, it is said, made some further faint attempt to revive the controversy, even after the council of Rome; but his spirits were now worn out, and, retiring to the Isle of Cosmus, near Tours, he died there in the year 1088.

The churchmen of this century were too busily engaged in the contentions which had arisen respecting the power and temporalities of their order, to cultivate with much success either literature or theology. Lanfranc, who rose to be archbishop of Canterbury; Berenger, whose career has been just described; and Hildebrand, whose epistles merit a place among the most eloquent compositions of the middle ages, would, probably, in a different state of things, have distinguished themselves as much by their authorship, as they did in the present period by their controversies and their ambition. Peter Damianus, who having received the dignity of cardinal, and the rich bishopric of Ostia, with that of Engalio *in commendam*, resigned them all to enjoy leisure and meditation, deserves an eminent place among the few writers of this century that are worthy of being named. His piety enabled him to describe with force

the corruptions which he lamented ; and his station afforded him the opportunity of discerning the evils which shook the foundations of the church, in their earliest growth. As he was frequently consulted by the sovereign pontiff on matters of deep interest, and carried on a correspondence with all the great men in the church, his letters and the record of his proceedings are a valuable addition to the history of his age. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, an admirable logician and grammarian ; Dithmar, a German monk, and a writer of chronicles ; with many others, might also form part of a list of the authors of this century : but little was added to the stock of knowledge, by their productions ; and thought seemed to acknowledge, at this period, no other impulse than ambition and the love of controversy. Among the Greeks, Theophanes the historian, Cedrenus, also an historian, Theophylactes, a commentator on Scripture, and Simeon the younger, are all whom it is necessary for us to mention as known to the present time. The last-named writer is celebrated for his asceticism, which is particularly exhibited in one of his discourses on prayer. "Three things are to be practised," says he, "in order to the attainment of your wishes on this subject : that is to say, contempt for the creature, both rational and irrational ; mortification ; and a conscience pure, undefiled, and free from every kind of passion and selfishness. Then, sitting tranquilly and alone in a corner of your cell, do what I now tell you : keeping your door shut, lift up your mind above the vain and transitory things of the world, and, bowing your head upon your knees, hold in your breath, and seek your heart in the spirit. At first all will be thick darkness : but continuing this practice day and night, you will discover wonders, and find endless consolation ; for when the mind has once found out the place of the soul, it perceives things of which before it had no conception . it discovers the atmosphere about the heart, and becomes luminous and full of wisdom." *

* Dupin.

The spirit which dictated this interesting description of ascetic meditation was that which governed the better order of minds in the establishment of those numerous monasteries which were now to be found in all parts of Christendom. More than one celebrated institution of this nature arose in this century. John Gualbert, a Florentine gentleman, founded, at its commencement, the celebrated convent of Vallombrosa, and nobly earned, by his holiness and virtues, the name of saint. Towards its close, Bruno of Cologne instituted the monastery of Chartreuse in a wild and melancholy desert, but not more gloomy in its aspect than the character of the new establishment. The rule of St. Benedict continued to form the basis of monastic government ; but it had been greatly modified by the sloth and licentiousness of the monks ; and in the new institutions which appeared at this period, it was the great object of their founders to revive, and increase by fresh regulations, the severity of the original law.

In this age, also, we first hear of the college of cardinals. The dignified clergy of several dioceses had been long known by the title of cardinal ; but it was not till now that they were collected into a body, and recognised as the established electors, ministers, and counsellors of the popes. A most important change was introduced into the government of the church by the institution of such an order. The people and the whole body of the clergy, who had before enjoyed so large a share in the election of the pontiffs, were thereby deprived of their rights ; and in a short time scarce a vestige was left of what had formed so striking a feature in the ancient church. If any thing was wanted to complete the system of corruption exhibited in the papacy, this was an admirable expedient to effect it. The clergy at large cannot easily be made the slaves of court influence ; if they are bribed, it must be by the grant of general privileges, which raise and profit the order itself : but a small class of men, like the Roman cardinals, are always under the power of temptations, which

render it equally dangerous to religion and freedom that they should be intrusted with the sole right of electing to great ecclesiastical offices.

The narrowness of our limits will not allow us to attempt any account of the controversies which arose about this time between the Nominalists, the Realists, and the Formalists, the names given to the several classes of logicians. But they had an evident connection with the theological disputes of the period; and during 400 years, the minutest questions of a strictly verbal philosophy were investigated with the same force and earnestness, and the same sacrifices of candour and charity, as the gravest doctrines of salvation. This was almost a necessary consequence of the authority which had been assumed by the dominant members of the church. Nothing can be more desirable than precision of ideas on matters of such importance as man's justification and renewal, and the methods by which they are effected; but precision is the measurement of ideas; and it is evident that any effort to force those which concern theological mysteries through the ordinary moulds of thought must be attended with many and dangerous errors. We cannot be precise where the objects contemplated lie beyond the comprehension of the mind: but the fearful intolerance of Rome had acted as a feverish, unhealthy stimulant to enquiry. Where life and death were concerned, there was ample reason to desire exact definitions; and the subtleties and anxious speculations of the schoolmen may, after all, be probably ascribed rather to the undue importance attached to particular dogmas, and to the practical consequences which followed their reception, than to the mere unsubstantial love of speculative logic.

CHAP. XIX.

ROMAN PONTIFFS. — DISPUTE BETWEEN ADRIAN AND FREDERIC BARBAROSSA. — STATE OF THE EASTERN CHURCH. — CELEBRATED MEN. — BERNARD AND ABELARD. — SECTS. — MONASTIC ORDERS.

A.D. 1099. URBAN was succeeded by Pascal II., a native of Tuscany, and from his earliest youth a member of the monastery of Clugni. He received the tidings of his elevation, it is said, with extreme regret; nor could he be persuaded, till some force was used, to quit the happy retirement he had enjoyed so many years, for the luxury and disquietudes of the pontifical court. The ceremonies of his institution were performed with a cautious particularity of splendour. A scarlet cope and a tiara, the newly adopted insignia of spiritual sovereignty, were placed upon him, and, mounted on a horse, he was conducted, with solemn music and singing, to the palace of the Lateran. There his loins were girded with the sacred cincture, which held seven keys and seven seals, emblems of the seven gifts of the Spirit; and he received the pastoral wand, which, unfortunately for the church, had almost entirely lost its forcible, and originally even pathetic, appropriateness in the hands of the sovereign pontiff. Pascal, unwilling as he had been to leave his retreat, carried with him few of those feelings into the world which are supposed to be engendered in solitude. He had lost neither the love of rule, nor the readiness to contend for the privileges which his predecessors had established; nor had he, apparently, any dread of sacrificing the small portion of repose which might have been secured, even in his exalted station, to the great design of enlarging and perpetuating the interests of the papacy. The quarrel between the emperor Henry and the church did not cease on the death of Hildebrand. The virulence which

had characterised the dispute in its commencement, was found in the rival powers at every stage of the controversy. Urban II. continued that which his predecessor had begun ; and Pascal insisted on the independence of the papacy with equal force, and apparently with better means for securing success. Henry, still under the ban of the church, made himself hated by the manner in which he treated his consort, and converted his son Conrad into the bitterest of his enemies, by endeavouring to prove that he had no claim to the name of his child. The pontiff, it is stated on very strong evidence, took advantage of this dissension ; and the young prince, after a daring and unnatural struggle, assumed the title of Henry V. Acknowledged by the greater part of Germany, favoured by the pope, and inspired by all the vigour and ambition of youth, he could scarcely fail of success ; and in a short time he was, with few exceptions, acknowledged as sovereign by all the states of the empire. The pontiff accepted his assurances that he was devoted to the interests of the church, and rewarded him with a support which mainly contributed to the prosperity of his affairs. Worn out with trouble and fatigue, the miserable father fell a prisoner into the hands of his son ; and in the year 1105, formally resigned his crown, with all the other emblems of royalty, to the youthful usurper. He afterwards endeavoured to re-assemble some of his followers, and hazard one more struggle for the recovery of his dignity ; but the attempt was defeated by a mortal sickness, which terminated his chequered career a few months after the above event.

The entry of the new monarch into Rome exhibited a display of the profoundest dissimulation. Pascal received him with a pomp and solemnity which were intended to impress him with the loftiest notions of papal majesty. He did not fail to discern these intentions, and his conduct was framed in accordance with the character of the scene. Humility and reverence sat upon his countenance ; and having descended from his

horse, he prostrated himself three times upon the ground, kissed the pontiff's feet, and thrice embraced him with the affection of a son. But the scene was rapidly changed. He had scarcely entered the church of St. Peter, when Pascal required him to renounce the right of investiture. To this desire he returned no answer ; but having sought his bishops and ministers in the sacristy, it was soon after intimated to Pascal that he was expected to confer on the sovereign the imperial crown. Pascal firmly declared that he could not comply with this command ; and Henry, with the fierceness and impatience of a youthful tyrant, instantly ordered his guards to seize the pontiff and conduct him to a place of confinement. He was obeyed ; and Rome, for two months, exhibited a melancholy spectacle of confusion and rapine. The demand which Henry made was confined to the complete enjoyment of the right of investiture ; and this the captive pope at length found himself compelled to grant. " I am driven," he said, to do that for the peace of the church, which I would have shed my blood to avoid." Tranquillity was thus restored. An attempt was made by some of the bishops to perpetuate the schism ; but both Pascal and his successor, Callistus II., continued at peace with Henry to the end of his reign.

A. D. 1118. On the death of Pascal, the bishops of Porto, Ostia, and others, elected John of Gaeta, who was chancellor of Rome, to the vacant chair. But his elevation was strongly opposed by the emperor's minister, Cencio Frangipane, who, following him to the church where the investiture was to take place, seized him by the throat, and after exposing him to every species of violence from his attendants, dragged him by the hair of the head to his house, and there left him chained, to await the orders of the emperor. He subsequently made his escape to his native place, of which he was made bishop ; and Henry, in the mean while, raised Maurice Bourdin, by the name of Gregory VIII., to the throne. Gelasius, as John of Gaeta was called, at-

tempted to recover his dignity, but only exposed himself thereby to new insults and dangers. Finding, therefore, that he could not remain in Italy with safety, he fled to Provence, where he died the following year. The antipope Gregory, though the way was now open for his accession to the throne, gained no advantage by the death of his rival. Guido, archbishop of Ravenna, a man of considerable powers of mind, and vast influence, ascended the papal chair without opposition, as Callistus II. The contest which he was obliged to carry on with Gregory, ended completely in his favour; and the defeated pretender died, after suffering innumerable miseries, in a monastery. Callistus himself died shortly after; and his successor, Honorius II., passed a reign of five years in fruitless contention with Roger of Sicily, by whom his troops were entirely defeated. Innocent II. and Anacletus II. both pretended to the dignity at his death; and the former, before he could establish his sole claim to the prize, had to spend several years as an exile in France. We pass over the obscure pontificates of his immediate successors. But in 1145, Bernard, abbot of St. Anastasius at Rome, and a favourite disciple of the celebrated saint of the same name, was elected to the see as Eugenius III. His former master heard of his elevation with extreme fear and anxiety. These feelings he expressed in numerous writings addressed to him and his friends on the occasion; and from them we learn what men of piety and spiritual experience continued to think, even in this age, of the real duties of a Christian bishop. In the letter which he wrote to the cardinals and others concerned in the election of his disciple, he says,—“ God pardon you for what you have done. You have drawn a dead man from the tomb, and replunged one into the tumultuous current of the world, whose whole desire it was to escape it.” In writing to the pontiff himself, he says,—“ Bernard my son is become, by a happy change, my father Eugenius. I wish the church may undergo as good a change, and that you may regard yourself as bound to sacrifice your

life for her welfare. How happy should I be, if, before I die, I could see her as she existed in the primitive times, when the apostles spread their nets, not to catch gold and silver, but souls! Ardently do I hope that you may be disposed to say with him, whose seat you occupy, — ‘Thy money perish with you!’ a wonderful word; a word like thunder, and fit to confound all the enemies of Zion. This it is which the church looks for from you: you are placed over nations and kingdoms, to pull down and destroy, to build and to plant.”

But whatever were the virtues of Eugenius, or the credit due to him from his intimacy with a man so full of wisdom and holiness as St. Bernard, the factious spirit which had long prevailed at Rome broke out into new excesses at the period of his elevation. Urged on by the popular eloquence of Arnold of Brescia, they were suddenly inflamed with the desire of restoring the institutions and government of the ancient capital; but the tumult which was commenced with this pretence, soon carried its authors to the commission of every species of violence; and the dazzling vision of Rome restored to its consular dignity was lost in the clouds and thick darkness which rose from the destruction of some of its finest buildings. Eugenius, by a timely exertion of energy, quelled these disorders; and his return to Rome was attended with all the marks of a triumph. The signs, however, of sedition were still too manifest on the faces of the Romans, to allow of his remaining secure among them, and he retired for some time into France. He came back to Italy about the year 1153, and died almost immediately after, at his residence in the town of Tibur.

A. D. 1154. The successor of Eugenius was Adrian IV., by birth an Englishman, and strongly characterised by all the ruling passions of the dignified clergy of this age. Frederic Barbarossa had, in the mean while, ascended the imperial throne, and his pride and ambition were fitting though dangerous companions for the haughtiness

of Adrian. It was not long before an opportunity was afforded these two distinguished men, to try the strength of their resolution and principles. Frederic, having been crowned king of the Lombards, hastened towards Rome ; but before he arrived at the gate of the city, he was met by three cardinals, who acquainted him that the pontiff could not hold any conference with a prince from whom he had as yet received no assurance of obedience, and of fidelity to the church. The monarch readily accorded the required professions of allegiance ; and a chevalier appointed for the purpose swore solemnly in his name, and on the holy relics, the cross and the Gospel, that he would preserve in safety the life, the liberty, and honour of both the pope and the cardinals. Adrian then intimated his readiness to crown him emperor, and was conducted with great pomp towards the sovereign's tent. But here a new cause of contention arose. Frederic had too high a sense of his imperial dignity, to manifest any servile complaisance for papal pride. Instead, therefore, of hastening, as some other princes had done, to perform the part of an esquire to the pontiff, he quietly awaited him in his pavilion ; which so offended Adrian, that he positively refused to grant him the kiss of peace, till he should perform the humiliating ceremonies to which the infamous pride of churchmen, and the pusillanimity of princes, had given a species of legitimacy. A whole day was expended in disputing whether the emperor should continue the practice or not. But Adrian was inflexible ; and the following morning, the haughty Frederic, in the presence of his army, purchased the kiss of peace, by standing like a menial at the side of the pope's horse, till he descended, and freed him from his degrading situation.

A powerful faction at Rome hailed with joy the approach of Frederic. The desire of limiting the despotism of the pope, and the expectation of drawing large sums as a largess from the imperial treasury, appear to have exercised an almost equal influence on their minds at this time. In their address to Frederic, the deputies

of this party assumed the station of men who had an unconquered country to present as a free-will offering to the valour and noble qualities of the prince they sought. They had, however, greatly mistaken the ideas of the emperor on the state of Italy. Frederic told them, and with a sternness which presaged a coming storm, that their country had been long and often conquered; that he was truly and lawfully their master; and that the king of Sicily, to whom they were always ready to appeal for protection, would never be able to free them from his sway. Adrian, on becoming acquainted with the purport of this interview between Frederic and the Roman deputies, advised the monarch to take possession forthwith of the church of St. Peter. This was soon effected, and Adrian placed the imperial crown on the head of the sovereign with far greater willingness than he would have done, had he not seen that his agreement with the prince was now essential to his safety, and to the preservation of the church. The populace, finding themselves set at nought by both the pope and the emperor, rose in a mass, and several of the German soldiers fell slaughtered in the aisles of St. Peter. But their death was amply revenged; the emperor attacked the Romans on all sides, and near 1000 citizens paid with their lives the forfeit of their licentiousness, or their indiscretion.

Restless and ambitious minds, like those of Adrian and Frederic Barbarossa, could not remain long at peace, when the power and privileges they possessed in their dependence upon each other were so ill defined. The first cause of dispute, after the pacification above related, was a letter which Adrian wrote to the emperor, accusing him of ingratitude for the benefits he had enjoyed through his ministration. Frederic, jealous of his authority, was farther exasperated by the pontiff's continuing to preserve an obnoxious picture in the palace of the Lateran, which he had promised to destroy. This painting represented the emperor Lothaire receiving his crown from the hands of the pontiff; and

that its meaning might not be lost sight of, an inscription placed below stated that the emperor, having stopped at the gates of the city, swore to uphold the rights of Rome, and became the vassal of the pope, to whom he was indebted for the crown.

Adrian found it necessary to appease the anger which both Frederic and his subjects expressed at these instances of assumption, and tranquillity was for a brief space restored. But scarcely had the angry feelings generated in the late dispute subsided, when the pontiff again manifested his inclination to oppose the views of the emperor, by refusing to confirm the archbishop of Ravenna, whom Frederic had elevated to that station, in his appointment. The fierceness with which the pontiff spoke and wrote on this occasion, threatened Christendom with a rupture as injurious to its peace, as that between the unfortunate Henry and Gregory VII. But Frederic's firmness was unshaken; and a barrier was thus erected against the attempts of the pope, which, intended only as a protection to particular rights, did, in reality, afford support to the universal principles of civil government. To Adrian's threat, that he would deprive him of his crown, he replied, that he held his crown, not from him, but from his own royal predecessors.* "In the days of Constantine," he asked, "had St. Sylvester any thing to do with the royal dignity? Yet this was the prince to whom the church was indebted for its peace and its liberty: and all that you enjoy as pope, whence comes it but from the emperors? Examine history, and you will find proofs of what we state. Why should we not demand homage from those who possess our lands, when He who had received nothing from men, paid tribute for himself, and for St. Peter? Let them, then, either resign the lands which they have received from our crown; or if they consider them too useful to do this, let them render unto God that which is God's, and to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Our churches and our cities

* Fleury, *Hist. Ecclés.* liv. 70. n. 5. &c.

are shut against your cardinals ; because we see that instead of coming to preach the Gospel, and promote peace, their whole desire and endeavour is to amass gold and silver. When we find that they are what the church would have them, we will refuse them nothing good for their support. It is horrible that pride, that monster so detestable, should be able to steal even into the chair of St. Peter.” The reasoning in this letter is clear and striking ; but the foundation of the dispute was, in reality, not so much whether the church should acknowledge the power of the sovereign over its mere temporal possessions, as whether the sovereign should exercise an unlimited right of appointing to spiritual offices. Neither Gregory nor his successors were willing to acknowledge practically, what seemed evidently proved to the common sense of mankind ; namely that lands, or revenues, derived from sources which essentially belong to the state, should be under the power of its laws. This led to the fatal error in their proceedings, which involved the true principles of their independence in such inexplicable mystery. The emperors, secure in their argument respecting the right of civil jurisdiction in matters of property, easily extended its application, when opposed on this point, to an interference with the church and its officers in matters purely ecclesiastical ; while the champions of the church, on their part, finding themselves attacked where they knew they might employ against the adversary the weapons of their faith, soon forgot the objects for which it was lawful to contend with such arms, and fought in the name of Christ for wealth, luxury, and dominion. Hildebrand was too good a churchman, proud and ambitious as he was, to lose sight of what it was especially necessary for churchmen to seek and uphold. It is not too much to conjecture that his haughty spirit would have been fully satisfied with the power of ruling men’s minds and consciences ; and that he would never have involved the church in confusion for the mere acquisition of temporalities ; but as we come down the stream of time, we

see this feeling gradually diminishing, and the anxiety for wealth and honour on the increase, till, at last, the principle which inspired the early combatants in the field, and gave a certain degree of grandeur to their ambition, disappears altogether in the strife of mere petulant and debased worldlings.

The death of Adrian saved the church from the danger which had threatened it during the government of that fierce and overbearing pontiff. But, while delivered from one set of evils, it was surrounded by others little less calculated to injure its interests. The cardinals, having assembled to elect a new pope, chose, by a large majority of their body, Roland, a cardinal, and chancellor of the Roman church. Their vote, however, was opposed by cardinal Octavian, who had expected to be nominated by his colleagues to the vacant dignity ; and when Roland, who assumed the name of Alexander III., was invested with the pontifical cope, he rudely and sacrilegiously pulled it from his shoulders, and, but for the interference of the persons present, would have put it on himself. As he was disappointed in this, he obtained, by signal, a cope of the same kind, which he suddenly threw over his shoulders, placing, in his haste, the hind part before. Loud laughter followed this mistake ; but Octavian felt no shame at the mingled ridicule and rebuke with which he was assailed. Going forth from the assembly, which he awed into silence by a band of armed men, he exercised, under the name of Victor IV., the part of sovereign pontiff ; and for some days kept Alexander in close confinement. The emperor Frederic did not look with indifference on these occurrences. A division in the church was equivalent to a great increase in his own power ; and he warmly espoused the cause of Octavian, chiefly, as it appears, because he was the head of a faction. He at last, however, summoned a council to consider the question between the rival popes. Alexander heard of this intention with extreme displeasure. “ We are astonished,” he said to the messengers by whom he was informed of the circumstance

“that the emperor should regard us with so little respect, as to summon a council without first seeking our co-operation and advice. Jesus Christ gave to St. Peter, and by him to the Roman church, the right of judging the cause of all the churches, without the necessity of submitting to judgment herself. Tradition, and the authority of the fathers, prohibit our going to the imperial court, or yielding to any judgment; and in conformity with these sentiments, we will rather stand exposed to the worst inflictions, than yield on a point of such vital importance to the Christian community, and to the well-being of the church.”

It is plain that Alexander, in this protest, assumed the very point in question; for if the emperor ought not to have summoned a council without consulting Alexander, whose election he disputed, he was certainly bound to make the same appeal to Octavian, whom he had acknowledged legitimately appointed. Frederic paid no attention, however, to objections so weak and ill-founded. The council which he had convened, assembled at Pavia, and Octavian was declared pope by the fifty bishops, the numerous abbots, and other dignitaries, of whom the meeting was composed. But Alexander was supported by the whole of that powerful party which contended for the doctrine of papal supremacy; and despising the decree of deposition passed against him at Pavia, he excommunicated the emperor for the part he had taken, and absolved his subjects from their oath of allegiance. Victor, on the other hand, was recognised as lawful pope, not only in Germany, but in England and France; by the monarchs of which countries he was received at Couci on the Loire, with all the pomp and ceremony which had been demanded for his successors by the haughty Adrian. He died in the year 1164; but the schism was continued by the immediate election of Pascal III., who retained the semblance of authority about three years. Alexander, on the death of Victor, had ventured to return to Rome, which he did not dare to attempt during the lifetime of that ecclesiastic.

But the emperor was not less zealous in the defence of Pascal, than he had been in that of his predecessor ; and the Romans themselves, finding him resolved to overcome the pretensions of Alexander, began to think of deserting the standard of that pontiff, for the party of his rival. A pestilence, which swept off the flower of Frederic's army, saved the pope from the expected ruin ; and the emperor, obliged as he was to make his escape into Germany as he best might, at length expressed his willingness to heal the schism which he had created in the church. Peace was accordingly restored, and Alexander returned to Rome in the midst of a numerous company of faithful adherents. As he approached the city, the clergy, the senators, and other dignitaries of the state, came forth to meet him, clad in their most splendid robes, with all the paraphernalia of office. The multitudes, in the mean while, rushing forth from the gates, flocked around him with olive branches in their hands ; and so anxious were they, it is said, to kiss his feet, that the horse on which he rode could scarcely make its way through the dense crowd which thus filled the streets.*

On the death of Alexander, Hubaud, bishop of Ostia, A.D.
1181
to
1198. was elected without opposition, and assumed the name of Lucius III.; and it has been noted, that at his election the cardinals first appropriated the right of choosing the supreme pontiff without the interference of the people, or of the other orders of the clergy. Popular indignation was loudly expressed on this occasion ; and, from murmurs, they proceeded to the expression of their feelings in a manner still more formidable to his safety. Obligated to seek safety by flight, he called upon the great European states to furnish him with supplies for the support of his rights against the disaffected citizens. His claims were allowed, and the riches of England and other countries were poured freely into his treasury. With these he made head against the insurgents : but such was the fierceness with which they resisted him, that

* Fleury, Hist. Ecclés., liv. 73. n. 36.

they tore out the eyes of the clergy whom they met beyond the walls of the city ; and obliged him to fix his residence at Verona, where he died in 1185. Urban III., Gregory VIII., and Clement III., passed their brief pontificates at a distance from Rome. The last-named pope, however, made peace with the senate and the people ; and his successor, Celestine III., was enabled, by the strength of his position, to exercise the most important of his assumed privileges without interruption. Henry VI., who at one time received from his hands the imperial crown, was at another punished by him with the ban of excommunication ; and Philip of France, surrounded as he was with knights and nobles, and supported by a synod of bishops, heard the sentence of divorce which he had obtained against his princess Ingeburge, publicly cancelled by the command of the pontiff. In both these cases, Celestine performed the part of a bold and just preserver of the most sacred of rights. Henry had imprisoned the noble Richard of England on his return from Palestine, and Philip was a violater of those laws of marriage, on which rest not only the security of private happiness, but many of the first principles which hold society together. If spiritual censures had been only thus exercised by the Roman pontiffs, and had remained uncoupled with any maxim referring to the temporal power of monarchs, the world would have been very long before it attempted any opposition to so wise and salutary a discipline.

The destructive schisms which afflicted the church of Rome, were contemplated in the East with more political complacency than Christian charity and regret. Alexius expressed his sympathy with the popes whom the emperor persecuted, in the strongest terms he could employ, and offered to assist them against his tyranny with the wealth and the forces of his dominions. Had not death prevented the completion of his designs, Italy would, probably, have again fallen partially under the sway of the Greeks. Few of the later monarchs of the

rapidly declining empire had possessed an equal degree of prudence, foresight, or religion, with Alexius. Unfortunately, the former qualities were deteriorated by being made subservient to political cunning, and were displayed in the invention and selection of artifices, instead of producing broad and efficient plans of improvement ; while his devotion, deeply tinctured with superstition, was exercised in the fiercest indulgence of intolerance. By his orders the Manichæans were exposed to a persecution, which the mere spirit of the age, undirected by his own personal feelings, could scarcely have excited. Basil, their patriarch, perished as a martyr in the flames ; and had not the danger in which the empire was repeatedly placed, acted as a counteracting force, the zeal of Alexius might have urged him to emulate the most striking examples of religious persecution. His successor, John Comnenus, manifested his readiness to cement a union between the two great divisions of the Christian world, by commencing a correspondence with Lothaire, the emperor of Germany. But the persons whom he intrusted with the duty of expressing his sentiments to that sovereign, were either charged with a twofold message, or greatly modified the declarations of their master, by the bold but, perhaps, uncalled for expression of their own opinions. The bishop of Rome, said they, is an emperor, and not a bishop. A philosopher was the representative of the party, and Lothaire directed the subject to be discussed in a formal and open manner. The Greek did not express himself with less boldness than at his first interview. "We consider the Latins," said he, "excommunicated for having made additions to the symbol ;" and he added,—"Now do we see the accomplishment of that which God has said by the prophet : the priest shall be as the people, for the bishops go to war, as your pope Innocent. They assemble troops ; they distribute money ; they wear purple garments."*

* Fleury, Hist. Ecclés. liv. 71. n. 20.

A.D.
1143. Manuel Comnenus, the son of the preceding emperor, began his reign with a signal triumph over the Persians; and his entry into Constantinople was a splendid repetition of the scenes which graced the earliest years of the empire. The clergy had ample reason to applaud his piety and munificence. His victories filled their treasuries with gold, and covered the altars with offerings. In conformity with his wishes, the controversy was renewed with the heads of the Latin church; and Anselm, bishop of Havelberg, charged with the defence of its doctrines, met the Greek bishop whom Manuel had sent for the purpose, at Tusculum. The result of their conferences is recorded in a work drawn up by Anselm himself; nor does it appear that there was, on either side, a want of reason or candour. But, unfortunately, not the smallest modification followed of what was least defensible in the two churches. Another attempt at re-union was made by Manuel in the year 1151, when he offered to assist the pope in driving William of Sicily from his coasts, in return for three maritime towns. Adrian manifested a spirit of concession, and was confirmed in this feeling by the archbishop of Thessalonica, whom he addressed on the occasion. "We have the same faith," said that prelate, "even the faith of St. Peter; and we offer the same sacrifice. And with regard to those minor subjects which have caused offences between us, your holiness can, by an act of authority, supported by the emperor, whose heart is in the cause, speedily disperse them." The Greek emperor manifested the same willingness to promote the peace of the church at a later period of his reign. Having acknowledged Alexander as legitimate pontiff of Rome, he answered his letters on the subject of a new crusade, with equal good sense and piety. "You have informed me," he said, "that the king of France, with other princes, is about to proceed to the succour of the Holy Land. I am ready to give them a passage through my dominions, and to provide for their subsistence; but I must be assured that they

shall not commit any violence in my territories, and that they shall restore to me whatever towns they may take from the Turks in Romania. As you are the promoter of this enterprise, I request you to send a cardinal with them, who may have sufficient authority and influence to repress the insolence of the wicked and the disorderly, some of whom we cannot but expect to find in so vast a multitude." It was with the same expressions of friendship he wrote to the pontiff on the subject of his struggle with Frederic Barbarossa ; but political considerations had at least an equal share in this correspondence, with the desire of re-uniting the long separated churches. Manuel died after a long reign of thirty-seven years, manifesting in his last hours the same devotion and reverence for religion as he had evinced in the principal acts of his government. The habit of a monk, hastily put over his royal garments, was esteemed necessary to his peaceful departure from the world ; and the emperor of the East expiring, happy and resigned, as a simple ecclesiastic, taught the great moral of the insufficiency and vanity of all earthly grandeur. He merited the praise of a firm and, as far as his knowledge and ability went, an enlightened supporter of the church. The patriarch Michael, whom he raised to the chair at the beginning of his reign, was a man of acknowledged worth ; and when the successor of this prelate, who retired into private life, was found to be imbued with some heretical opinion, he procured his immediate deposition. His care for the church was also shown in the laws he established respecting the observances of public festivals ; and his anxiety for the preservation of its doctrines free from any tincture of heresy, by the canons of the council which he assembled at Constantinople, the decrees of which on the subject of the incarnation of our Lord, he had engraved on marbles which were placed in the cathedral of St. Sophia. To this we may add an instance of his discretion, and knowledge of the dangers to which religion was exposed by the cupidity of princes on the one side, and

the licentiousness of the clergy on the other. Following in this the example of his predecessor, he published a law prohibiting the alienation of church lands, or the appropriation of the revenues of vacant bishoprics to any secular purpose ; and pursuing, in the other instance, the dictates of his own good sense, he forbade the attempts which were daily made to increase the possessions of the monastic orders ; observing, that his father and uncle had both acted unwisely in bestowing rich estates on men who were bound by the very nature and object of their vows to forsake whatever could tempt them to luxury, for the caves and solitudes of the desert.

The youth of Manuel's son and successor, Alexius, exposed him to the machinations of every political adventurer that had sufficient talent to make himself acceptable to the court. Had the evil of this been confined to the enriching of native aspirants after wealth or honours, his weakness might have been pardoned, and his liberality praised ; but his mother was the daughter of the celebrated crusader, Raimond, prince of Antioch ; and through the connection thus established with the Latins, Constantinople was filled with Western nobles and their followers. As Manuel, urged by various motives, but especially by his willingness to make peace with the church of Rome, had greatly favoured the presence of these strangers, they were prepared, at his decease, to take full advantage of the minority of his son. The frequent elevation of the foremost among them to stations of power and dignity highly incensed the Greeks ; and it was evident to the eye of Andronicus, an ambitious and long suspected member of the royal family, that, by a bold stroke, he might at once induce the enraged people to tear the crown from the young and misled emperor. Little effort was required to effect the object in view. The inhabitants of Constantinople rose simultaneously at the word of the usurper. Some vessels in the harbour furnished the more active portion of the Latins with the means of flight ; but a large number remained behind,

and these, with the cardinal whom the pope had sent on an expedition of peace, were instantly slaughtered, or sold as slaves to the Turkish merchants who happened to be at hand.

Andronicus was proclaimed emperor, together with the young Alexius, whom he for a few days treated with the utmost regard and pretended affection. When public suspicion seemed allayed, he had him barbarously murdered, and occupied the throne as sole sovereign of the East. But a terrible retribution was at hand. The Latins, who learnt, while coasting along the shore, the fate of their friends and brethren in Constantinople, had already evinced their power of taking vengeance, by ravaging, for many miles around, the undefended country, with its towns and villages. Soon, also, did the tyranny and sanguinary violence of Andronicus rouse his subjects to rebellion ; and Michael the Angel, whom he had ordered to be apprehended, gave the signal for revolt by slaying the soldier who bore the order for his arrest. The usurper was seized before he could prepare for resistance ; and, torn from the imperial palace, was placed on an ass, paraded through the streets, and, covered with the filth which had been heaped upon him by the enraged multitude, and the gore which streamed from his lacerated body, he was at last hung up by the feet in the public theatre, exclaiming, with his last breath, “ Lord, have mercy on me ! ” and to the people as they heaped blows and curses upon him, “ Why break you the bruised reed ? ”

Michael, who was rewarded for his courage and enterprise with the imperial crown, retained the dignity to near the close of the century. He was then dethroned by his own brother Alexius, who, to protect himself by all the advantages of old and venerable associations, assumed the surname of Comnenus. The benefit which, it was seen, would result from the establishment of peace with the Roman church, induced him, immediately after his accession, to address the supreme pontiff on the subject. Innocent III., who was then on the throne,

replied, that he desired to see him prove his zeal for the faith by lending his strenuous aid for the recovery of the Holy Land, which had again fallen under the yoke of the infidel. Alexius cautiously answered, that, he confessed, little zeal had been shown in that sacred undertaking, but that the time was not yet come for carrying it on, and that he feared to oppose himself to the will of God, enraged with the sins of Christians. "We are too divided among ourselves," he concluded, "to indulge any hopes of success. You are not ignorant how the king of Germany has ravaged my lands, after all the solemn oaths he pronounced that he would pass them in peace. How could I unite with a people so ill-inclined towards my dominions? Turn, then, your censures against those who, while they seem to work for Jesus Christ, act so manifestly against the will of God. With regard to the reunion of the churches, that may be easily effected, when the minds of their members are united, and the bishops have renounced the wisdom of the flesh."*

The Greek prelates appear, during this period, to have retained but little of the purity or the firmness which characterised so many of the founders of their order. Thus, when Andronicus insisted on their granting him, and his associates in crime, absolution for the murder of the unfortunate young Alexius, they basely yielded to his command, and a synod of Christian bishops formally pronounced the basest of usurpers free from crime. Isaac the Angel deposed the patriarchs Basil and Nicetas by a simple act of his authority. Leontius, a monk, whom he next elevated by a similar violation of law, was also in the same manner deprived of the dignity. The choice of the capricious tyrant then fell on Dositheus, patriarch of Jerusalem; but, as it was contrary to the Canons to remove a prelate from one diocese to another, he had to exercise some art before, arbitrary as he was, he dared venture on so bold an experiment. He, therefore, privately informed Theodore Balsamon, the patriarch of Antioch, who had been

* Fleury, *L'Hist. Ecclés.* liv. 75. n. 14.

expelled his see by the Latins, that he had long regretted so able a man should remain shut out from the church, and that it was now his anxious desire to place him on the patriarchal throne of Constantinople, could he persuade the bishops to acknowledge, as lawful, the elevation of a prelate belonging to another see. Theodore, who is said to have been a man deeply versed in logic and the knowledge of the laws, gladly undertook to convince his brethren of the legality of such a proceeding, and a decree was speedily obtained, annulling the prohibition in the way of his election; but no sooner had the emperor heard the decision of the synod, than he placed Dositheus on the throne, defying the bishops, on the strength of their act, to blame his proceeding. The indignation which filled their minds on finding the deception which had been practised upon them, impelled them to insist on the immediate disgrace of the new patriarch. They were still too powerful a body to be despised; but the circumstance is sufficient to show the fearful degradation to which superstition and riches had, by their combined influence, reduced the church in the East.

We now pause in our rapid recital of the events of this period, to consider the characters and opinions of those distinguished men, who stemmed, in some degree, that dark torrent of vice, and those thickly gathering clouds, which were threatening to remove the few remaining distinctions between the visible church and the world at large. St. Bernard claims our earliest notice. This great ornament of his age was born at the close of the eleventh century, at Fontaine, a village in Burgundy. The rank of his father, who was lord of Fontaine, held out to him the prospect of advancement; and the ability and thoughtfulness which he evinced at an early age, encouraged the best hopes that were formed of his future rise. But, with enlargement of his mind, his ideas became more strongly fixed on the objects which he had been taught by the affection of his pious mother to regard with peculiar reverence. He had scarcely, there-

fore, arrived at the years of manhood, when he resolved to leave the world, to enjoy in solitude the pleasures of devotion, and provide for his advancement in that species of knowledge and wisdom which he had learnt to feel were of greater importance than any thing mankind could teach or afford him. The place of his retirement was the monastery of Cisteaux, situated a few leagues from Dijon ; and he was accompanied thither by all his brothers, and several friends, whom his persuasive descriptions of the advantages of a life of prayer and solitude had made enamoured of ascetic virtue. Bernard's piety acquired him power and respect. He was consecrated abbot of Clairval ; and in the disputes which occurred, not only between monasteries, or particular churches, but between rival pontiffs, his singular virtue and wisdom were appealed to as sufficient to determine the nicest questions of the rival parties. By his decision alone, the king of France was induced to acknowledge Innocent II. as the lawful successor of Honorius ; and in all the subsequent contentions with the emperor, both in Germany and Italy, he was the chief speaker and actor.* Such was his influence at this time, that princes trembled before him, who disregarded the thunders of the pope himself. The duke of Guienne had long defied the remonstrances of the church, when Bernard visited him in company with the papal legate. It was not with persuasions the saint now addressed him. " We have prayed again and again," he said, " and you have continued to despise us. Many servants of God have united their supplications with ours, but to no avail. Now, therefore, the Son of God, who is Lord and Head of the church which you persecute, is come in person to see if you will repent. Behold, here is your Judge, before whom every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth, and even in hell. Here is that avenger of your crimes, into whose hands this rebellious spirit of yours must one day fall. Will you despise and reject him ? Will you be able to slight

* Muratori, *Annal. d'Italia*, an. 1134.

him, as you have done us his servants?" The heart of the prince, it is said, was smitten with fear and agony at this awful appeal, and he returned to the bosom of the church with every appearance of sincere repentance.

Bernard was sincerely devoted to those rules of a monastic life, to which he had at so early a period of his career willingly professed himself subject. He, therefore, beheld, with the deepest affliction, the disorders which prevailed in the various religious establishments which he had the opportunity of visiting in his several journeys. This feeling was mingled with one of bitter indignation against the authors of the corruption; and his severe writings on the subject, afford at once an interesting display of character, and a very valuable illustration of the state of the church.* "I can never sufficiently wonder," said he, "how so great a licentiousness in meals, habits, beds, equipages, and horses, can get in and be established, as it were, among monks; insomuch that those who have thus wholly abandoned themselves to these excesses, seem yet to have had a mighty regard to the spirit and religion of their ancestors. so that, in fact, by these extravagant proceedings they have procured vices the name of virtues; and on the contrary, virtues the name of vices. When a moderate expense is sometimes called covetousness; sobriety, though not extraordinary, austerity; and silence, sadness; they, on the contrary, call a loose behaviour, the effect of discretion; profaneness, liberality; and much talking, but common civility. Immoderate laughing, with them, is no more a vice, but goes under the name of a necessary gaiety. Luxury in habits, and pride in horses, are looked upon as the good breeding of a monk; and superfluous ornaments are the furniture of his chamber. Yet, whatever they thus lavish away, can it be called charity? No; unhappy charity, that destroys the true! irregular discretion, that confounds in us that of virtue! cruel pity, that has greater regard to the body than the soul!

* Dupin, Hist. of Twelfth Cent. art. BERNARD. Cave, Hist. Lit. Sæc. Waldeus.

What a strange charity is this, to provide so well for the flesh, and to take no care of the spirit ! What discretion to give all to the body, and none to the soul !” Having contrasted the sobriety of the primitive monks with those of his own age, he continues : — “ Are not their mouths and ears equally filled with victuals and confused voices ? and while they thus spin out their immoderate feasts, is there any one who offers to regulate the debauch ? No, certainly ; dish dances after dish ; and for abstinence, which they profess, two rows of fat fish appear swimming in sauce upon the table. Are you cloyed with these ? The cook has art sufficient to prick you up others of no less charms. He will provide sauces as different as your dishes. Thus, plate is devoured after plate ; and such natural transitions are made from one to the other, that they fill their bellies, but seldom blunt their appetites ; for their palate is so agreeably entertained with various novelties, that it has not the leisure allowed it to be satisfied. Now hunger is revived again, the appetite is awakened, and they fall on with the same greediness and gust. The belly, having no eyes, sees not how much it takes in, and it is at last rather filled than glutted. And because the simplicity of nature is not entertaining enough, we make mixtures and hotchpotches of different kinds, and by exquisite savours, support and encourage our intemperance ; and yet, though we recede so much from nature, we are not able to fill the vast bounds of our desires.” He then reproves in a similar manner their excess and niceness in drinking ; and ridicules the custom of some monks, who, being young, healthy, and strong, would retreat, at sacrament time, into the infirmary to eat and drink. From their excess in eating and drinking, he proceeds to their dress. “ We do not think ourselves well dressed,” said he, “ unless we have the best of every thing on our backs. We do not search after the most decent and commodious, but the gayest clothes. We do not enquire for the warmest, but the finest cloth. In a word, we do not desire, pursuant to our vows, what may be most ser-

viceable to us, but what may cover us with variety? Do we not every day see that those habits which were given to the monks as marks of humility, are so contrived that they serve rather to exalt their pride? scarce can a whole kingdom furnish them suitably to their extravagant desires. The soldier and the monk almost participate of the same habit in the field and the cell. Will not a monk's habit now-a-days become a man of the world? A prince, likewise, providing he were in the fashion, would not look amiss in their garments. But you will tell me, perhaps, with the proverb, that the habit does not make the monk, and that it is virtue alone which governs the heart, though the person be never so splendidly clothed. Very well; then I would ask you, when you traverse the town, visit all fairs, and the merchants' houses, overturn the magazines, unfold the silks, feel them with the fingers, view them with your eyes, hold them up to the light, reject some and like others; whether you have not more vanity than virtue?"

St. Bernard had to endure all the censure and contradiction which are usually suffered by the reprovers of powerful bodies; and from no members of the monastic establishments did he receive stronger marks of dislike than from the abbots and other dignitaries, who, it appears, very unwillingly heard the reproof of corruptions of which their own luxury and sloth had been the fruitful parents. "I am accused," says he, "of being severe: no matter, I cannot hold my tongue; I must always take the liberty to enquire how the salt of the earth comes to be so depraved? what occasions men, who in their lives ought to be examples of humility, by their practice to give instructions and examples of vanity? and, to pass by many other things, what a proof of humility is it to see a vast retinue of horses with their equipage, and a confused train of valets and footmen, so that the retinue of a single abbot outshines that of two bishops! May I be thought a liar, if it be not true that I have seen one single abbot attended by above sixty horses. Who could take these men for the

fathers of monks and the shepherds of souls? or who would not be apt to take them rather for governors of cities and provinces? Why, though the master be four leagues off, must his train of equipage reach to his very doors? One would take these mighty preparations for the subsistence of an army, or for provisions to travel through a very large desert. Cannot wine and water be poured undefiled out of the same cup? Cannot a candle give light but in a gold or silver candlestick? Cannot you sleep upon any other bed but one of tissue? Will not one servant suffice to guide the horse, serve at table, and make the bed? If you tell me it is to save charges in an inn that you carry so many things, then will I ask you why every one does not carry his own provisions." He speaks with not less severity respecting their buildings. "But all this," says he, "is little or nothing. Let us proceed to matters of greater consequence, and so much the greater, as by how much they are more common. I shall not take notice of the dimensions of our churches—of their stately height, of their excessive length, and superfluous breadth; of their sumptuous ornaments and curious pictures, which, attracting the eyes of the congregation, do not a little, I fancy, divert their devotion, and which seem to me not much more allowable than the ceremonies of ancient Judaism. As for my part, I would have all devotion and places of worship tend to the glory of God. I would fain ask the monks,—for I am a monk myself,—a question which a pagan heretofore demanded of pagans. 'Tell me, ye priests,' says he, 'what has gold to do in holy places?' Now, I would make use of his sense, though not of his words. Tell me, poor souls, then—say, if you may be called poor souls, what has gold to do in the sanctuary? I do not speak of bishops and their churches, for they may take a greater liberty; but I speak of the churches of monks. We know that bishops are indebted both to wise men and fools, and must be allowed to stir up that devotion in the people by images and other such sensible objects, which they could not raise by their preach-

ing. But we, that are now no more of the world ; that have forsaken all the pleasures and riches of life, for Jesus Christ his sake ; who have cast beneath our feet all that glitters in the eyes of the world, and have fled from concerts of music, fragrant smells, and feasting our senses ; — shall we, I say, interrupt our devotion by these baubles which we have left for its sake ? What can we expect, if we should acquiesce in all these vanities ? The admiration of sots or the satisfaction of fools. Is it not the commerce we entertain with the world that causes us to offer incense to its idols ? and, to speak more plainly, is not avarice the cause, that very worst of idolatries ? Is it not true that we have greater regard to the people's riches than their salvation ? If you ask me, how comes this to pass ? I will discover the wonderful secret to you. There is a certain art to multiply riches by exhausting them, and, like a river, to make them increase while they flow ; for here profuseness is the cause of their abounding. Here the eyes and minds of the spectators are so seduced by these costly vanities, that, instead of offering their hearts to God, they sacrifice their purses to man. Thus you may see how riches swallow up riches, and how the money of the monks proves a bait for that of fools ; for men have, I know not what, inclinations to throw water into the sea, and to heap riches upon those that have them in abundance. The monks cover the relics with rich attire ; and the pilgrim, for fear of being dazzled, approaches them with shut eyes and an open purse. The best adorned of these images are ever the most holy. Men crowd to pay them devotion ; but, first, they must be consecrated with the holy water ; and then they are led to the image, where, for the most part, they admire the ornaments more than the thing itself. Next the church is hung round, not with crowns of thorns, but rows of pearls. The lights of the lamps are heightened by the lustre of diamonds ; and instead of candlesticks, you see great branches of brass mounted, whose weight and workmanship are equally to be ad-

mired. What do you think can be the cause of all these fine things? Are they more to put you in mind of your sins than to move your admiration? No, certainly. O vanity of vanities! but this is not so much a vanity as a folly. The church shines in its walls, and suffers in its poor. It covers its stone with costly garments, and leaves its children the misfortune of being naked. Here the eyes of the rich are fed with the bread of the poor. The curiosity of men is indulged, when the miseries of the indigent are neglected. Nevertheless, if we are insensible to the wants of men, we ought to have more respect to the images of our saints than to pave our churches with them. What shame is it for us to spit in the mouth of an angel, and tread on the face of a saint? But all this while, if we have an indifference for the carving, why do we not spare the beauty of the painting? why do we paint with our hands, what we intend to deface with our feet? why do we take so much pains in embellishing what we intend to defile the next moment? what signify so many fine strokes, when they are immediately to be covered with dust? In a word, what occasion is there for all these vanities among poor monks who have renounced the world, unless we have a mind to answer this pagan poet with David, — ‘Lord, I have been all inflamed with zeal for the honour of thy house and the tabernacle of thy glory.’ Well, then, I agree with you; I consent to these excesses in the church; the simplicity and devotion of prayers may possibly sanctify that, which would be a crime in a prodigal; but, in cloisters, to what purpose are these paintings and carvings before people who weep for their sins?”

But it was not against rival and dissolute monks that St. Bernard had chiefly to exert his powers. Dark as was the age in respect to the mass of the people, and the corruptions of the genuine sources of learning, men of active and profound intellect were not wanting to keep in agitation the waters of that broad and not shallow reservoir of thought, which had been gradually

filling with the progress of Christianity. The philosophers of the middle ages were all theologians; and, with few exceptions, the theologians were philosophers. Divided into the two great classes, of those who pursued their investigations with Aristotle for their master, and of those who drew their principles from the Scriptures as they had been digested into systems by the fathers, they met each other on every point of theology which could be made to support a question; and while each grew stronger in the love of his system, and in the facility of managing his weapons, truth lay bleeding, and in fetters, the victim of their mutual violence. We again regret that our limits will not allow us to enter into any detail of subjects so involved in difficulty as the minute scholastic disputes of this period, but a very brief space will suffice to show the nature and tendency of the current literature of the church while they prevailed. St. Bernard occupied the most eminent station that could be assigned to a theologian who aimed at establishing his opinions on the Word of God. Inspired by intense devotion, superior to the splendid fascinations of ambition, filled with thoughts which had long taught him to look to heaven for his reward, he could not fail to possess that faith which is ever gladly turning for refreshment to the heavenly fountain of truth. It was this which imbued the writings and conversation of Bernard with that unction of evangelical eloquence, which made them, and still continues to make them, worthy of the admiration of Christians. Ranged on his side were a numerous body of the best and sincerest friends of the church; of the most eloquent preachers, and of the best expositors of Scripture, so far as the Scriptures could be understood by the abridgments and summaries into which they were thrown. The celebrated Peter Lombard produced in this century his well-known Book of Sentences, — a work in which he demonstrated, under four general heads, the sublime truths of religion, by the careful collocation of the opinions of the fathers. His method was followed by several writers of eminence; and the

Book of Sentences acquired a reputation which placed its author at the head of the theological party, as it may be termed, in contradistinction to the dialecticians. *Sententiarii* thenceforward became the common title of the former, who soon after shared it with the equally barbarous appellations of the *Dogmatici*, the *Positivi*, and the *Biblici*.

At the period when St. Bernard was in the zenith of his reputation, there appeared in the church a man whose talents would have made him conspicuous under whatever circumstances they had been brought into action. This was the eloquent, the learned, the unfortunate Abelard. From his earliest youth he applied himself to the study of dialectics; and having completed his courses at Paris, the most renowned seat of theological learning in the age, he took up his residence at Melun, where he commenced giving lectures on the most abstruse doctrines of divinity. On returning to the capital, he established a school for dialectics at Mont St. Génévieve. He then proceeded for a time to Laon, where he studied theology; but was expelled for the boldness of his opinions, which he set forth with the force of great natural eloquence, and defended by all the strength of his favourite art. At Paris, he propounded his doctrines in the midst of those crowds of inquisitive and adventurous students who came from all parts of Europe to that celebrated university. The force of his genius was irresistible; and Abelard established his opinions in the minds of those who were to be the guides and lights of the Christian world. It was in the midst of his triumphs that he became enamoured of the beautiful Heloïse, the niece of Fulbert, one of the canons of the church of Paris. His passion was met with not inferior fervour; and the lovers fled during the night, to engage in a secret marriage. Feverishly alive, however, to the fame of her distinguished husband, Heloïse persuaded Abelard to keep their union a mystery, and she became a nun in the abbey of Argenteuil. This step proved fatal to Abelard. Her

relations, supposing that he was now only anxious to conceal his own disgrace and hers, by making her a sacrifice to his selfish fears, took a revenge on his person, which proves, at the same time, both the fierceness of their hate and the barbarous spirit of the age. After this event he entered the monastery of St. Denys, and Heloïse consented to take the veil; but the hearts of these ill-fated lovers were little prepared for the change; and it was not till long after their retreat, that the solitude of their cells was found to soften the poignancy of grief, or the regrets of their fatal passion. The admiration, however, of Abelard's eloquence was too great and general to allow of his remaining concealed in the shades of a cloister. His scholars flocked to the monastery, and clamoured at its gates for the instructions of the man to whom they conceived themselves indebted for whatever was striking or original in their views. The demand was granted; and Abelard was permitted to open his school in the priory of Deuil. The concourse of students from the most distant countries proved how little he had lost of vigour of mind, or boldness of thought, during his retreat: but the free expression of his views now attracted the notice of the heads of the church. His work on the Trinity was said to express a belief in three Gods; and the council of Soissons condemned the book to the flames, and their author himself to imprisonment in the monastery of St. Medart in that city. The latter part of the sentence was soon remitted, and he returned to St. Denys; but having declared himself sceptical as to the truth of the traditions respecting the founder of that monastery, he was obliged to seek safety by flight. In the neighbourhood of Nogart-sur-Seine he found a wild and solitary tract of country which would not have been unfit to engage the attention of the most distinguished of the old ascetics; and, in this lonely spot, Abelard built himself a little hermitage of the reeds and other materials furnished by the neighbourhood. Prayer and meditation were here his sole employment; and his mind

began to form a right estimate of the folly of the world, and the vanity of its pursuits. A deep feeling of comfort followed these exercises ; and in the new enjoyment of religious hope, he consecrated his hermitage by the hallowed name of the great Comforter himself, — the Spirit of truth and consolation — the Paraclete. Many of his former pupils gathered round him again in this retirement, and built cells in the vicinity of their master's. The pursuit, however, of his enemies obliged him to escape into Britany, and he was elected abbot of St. Gildas ; but he soon returned into France ; and, in the year 1139, his work having been laid before St. Bernard, with the express desire on the part of some eminent churchmen that it might be confuted, he was brought into immediate collision with the distinguished founder of Clairval.

The works of Abelard embrace the main points of the scholastic system ; and we shall, therefore, give the abstract which has been drawn up of the opinions of this celebrated theologian, as affording a striking view of the state of doctrine at this period, and of those subtle systems into which the schoolmen had retreated from the pure, strong light of the Gospel itself. In the first book of his far-famed Introduction to Divine Science, he states, “ that there are three things necessary to salvation, — faith, charity, and the sacrament ; for he believes that hope is comprehended in faith, as a species in its genus. He defines faith to be the estimation or idea of invisible things ; and hope, the expectation of some good : faith, according to him, has respect to good and evil, both present and future ; whereas hope has only regard to future good. He defines charity to be an honourable love, directed to its due end or object ; and lust, on the contrary, to be a shameful and dishonourable love. Love in general is that good will and affection which one has for another, whereby one wishes to another some good, from the sole esteem which he has for him. Charity is the love of God ; lust or concupiscence is the love of the world. God is the ultimate end or object of the

former ; man is the ultimate end or object of the latter. He observes that man is the cause, but ought not to be the end of his actions ; and that what he does for himself ought to have a respect to God. As for the sacrament, he defined it to be an outward and visible sign of the invisible grace of God. Thus, for instance (says he), when a man is baptised, the outward washing of the body which we behold, is the sign of the inward washing of the soul. Faith is the foundation of other virtues, because we only hope for what we believe. For which reason it is defined by the apostle (Heb. ii. 1.) to be the substance, *i. e.* the foundation and origin, of things hoped for ; things invisible or future are properly the object of faith, though sometimes we apply this term to things which are seen. Among the things which may be believed, there be some which it is no matter whether they be believed or not ; such as whether it please God it should or should not rain to-morrow. But when we speak of faith, we mean only that which relates to such things as we are obliged to believe under the pain of damnation ; and which belong to the catholic or universal faith, the which is so necessary, that without it no man can be saved. This faith has for its object the nature of God and his benefits shown to mankind. In the first place, it is requisite to re-treat of that which relates to the nature of God, and to explain how there is but one God and three persons."

Having treated of the unity, simplicity, and immutability of God, he proceeds to the Trinity of persons ; and on this he states, that " one of the divine persons is not the other : that the Father, for instance, is not the Son, nor the Son the Holy Ghost, because they are of the same nature, and distinguished only personally ; that the property of God the Father is, not to be begotten ; that of the Son, to be begotten, but not made nor created ; that of the Holy Ghost, to proceed from the Father and the Son, but not made nor created. The names of the three persons comprehend the essence,

which is supremely or infinitely perfect. The power of God is denoted by the name of Father, the wisdom by that of Logos or the Son, and the love of God towards men by that of the Holy Ghost,—the three things which make up the supreme good. The distinction of these three persons serves to persuade men to render to God the worship and adoration which they owe to him ; for two things inspire us with respect, viz. fear and love. The power and wisdom of God make us fear Him, because we know that he is our Judge ; that he can punish us, and that nothing is hid from his eyes ; and his goodness makes us love Him, because it is but just and reasonable to love him who does us so much good. This likewise serves to render the works of God the more admirable, since he can do whatsoever he pleases ; since he knows how to preserve what he has made, and wills that every thing should be made and subsist in its order.” He then observes, “ that yet we ought not to believe that those attributes do so agree to each of the divine persons, but that they may be common to them all ; so that we are not to believe that the Father is only powerful, the Son only wise, and the Holy Ghost only merciful ; but, on the contrary, that these three persons have the same power, wisdom, and mercy : that these three properties are only attributed to the three divine persons in an especial manner, as their particular operations are attributed to them, though all the divine operations which relate to the creature are common to all the three persons, namely, the creation to the Father, the incarnation to the Son, and the regeneration to the Holy Ghost.” He next proves the mystery of the Trinity by several passages out of the Old Testament, and by numerous testimonies drawn from the writings of the heathen philosophers.

In treating of the divine nature, he says, that “ God is not an accident, nor properly a substance, if that word be taken to signify an essence, which supports accidents ; that he may be called an essence ; that he is not comprehended under any of Aristotle’s ten Cate-

gories ; that we want proper terms whereby to express his nature and perfections, but that we make use of energical and figurative terms, and give examples and similitudes to explain perfectly what agrees to this ineffable nature." On the mystery of the Trinity, he further observes, " that things may be one ; either by resemblance, or in number, or in propriety, and that, as in one and the same thing there are a great many properties, so in one and the same Divine Essence there are three distinct persons, who have distinct properties ; because the Father begets, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. That it is true, indeed, that we have not, among created beings, any instance wherein one and the same essence are three persons ; but that we are not to seek for a perfect resemblance, since it is sufficient to bring some comparisons. He produces that of a seal, composed of the materials, and the figure engraven thereon. The seal is neither the simple material, nor the simple figure, but a sort of an integer composed of both ; and yet, in reality, the seal is nothing else but the material, thus or thus engraven, though the figure is not the material, nor the material the figure."*

He next endeavours to distinguish the procession of the Holy Ghost from the generation of the word, inasmuch as, " the *Logos*, being wisdom, partakes of the power of the Father, and may therefore be said to be of the substance of the Father ; whereas, the Holy Ghost being denoted by the name of love or charity, which is not a power, is not of the substance of the Father. He also corrects the notion of Arianism, which those words seem to imply, by saying, that the Holy Ghost is of the substance of the Father, in the sense that he so proceeds from him as to have the same substance with him ; but that, though he be consubstantial to the Father, yet, properly speaking, he is not

* Dupin, from whom this abstract is taken, observes on the last sentence, — " This is a hard and improper expression, contrary to the manner of the orthodox, and conformable to that of the Arians, though *Abelard* rejects their error."

begotten of his substance." He then says, "that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, because love, or, rather, the effect of love, proceeds from power and wisdom; since the reason of God's doing good is, because he has power to do it, and wisdom to know that it is good." He then shows, in reference to the opinions of the Greeks concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son alone, that any thing might lawfully be added to the creed, provided it were not contrary to the faith, and explains the coeternity of three Divine Persons, "by the instance of the light and rays which proceed from the sun, and which exist the same moment with the sun. Lastly, he pretends that the heathen philosophers have acknowledged the Trinity."

In the third book, which treats particularly of the power of God, he maintains, "that God cannot do any thing but what he does do, and cannot do all that he does not do, because God can only do what he wills; but he cannot will to do any thing but what he does do, because it is necessary for him that he should will whatever is convenient: from whence it follows, that whatever he does not do is not convenient; that he cannot will to do it, and, consequently, cannot do it. He himself owns, that this is his own particular notion; that scarce any body else is of this opinion; that it seems contrary to the doctrine of the saints and to reason, and to derogate from the greatness of God. Hereupon he starts a very difficult objection. "A reprobate," says he, "may be saved, for he knows no being but what God does save; wherefore God may save him, and, consequently, do something which is not necessary to be done." To this he replies, "that one might very well assert, that such a man may be saved by the relation to the possibility of human nature, which is capable of salvation; but that it could not be affirmed, that God could save him, if we have respect to God himself; because it is impossible that God should do any thing but what he ought to do." He explains this by several examples:— "A man who speaks may hold his tongue; but "it is

impossible for one who speaks to be at the same time silent. A man's voice may be heard ; but one who is deaf cannot hear it. A field may be cultivated and tilled, though a man may not cultivate it."

On the immutability of God, he says, " that God does not change himself when he produces new effects, because in him there are not such new motions and new inclinations as there are in us, but only new effects proceeding from an eternal will ; that he cannot change places, since he is omnipresent ; and that when it is said that he descended into the Virgin's womb, it is to denote his humiliation : that in being made man, he was not changed, because the Divine Substance is united to the humane nature without a change of its nature, and that the person of Jesus Christ is a compound of the Divine Logos, the soul, and of the flesh ; that those three natures are united in such a manner as they retain each their own nature ; and that as the soul is not changed into flesh, so the Divine nature is not changed, though it be personally united to the soul and the flesh." Lastly, he treats of the divine knowledge and wisdom, and says, " that God has foreseen and pre-ordained all things ; and so, with respect to God, nothing happens by chance, though his presence does not destroy free-will. He defines it to be a free determination of the will, and asserts that it has been frequently experienced, that the will is not constrained by any violence, and that it has a power of doing, or not doing, a thing. He observes, that this kind of freedom in the will does not relate to God, but only to men, who may alter their will, and do, or not do, a thing. He produces the opinion of some, who believed that this freedom consists in a power of doing both good and evil ; but he maintains, that those who are so happy as to have no power of sinning, are nevertheless free, and are so the more, because of their being delivered from the servitude of sin. From hence he concludes that, generally and properly speaking, free-will is, when one may voluntarily and without constraint accomplish that which it has resolved upon ; a liberty

which is in God as well as in men, and in all who are not destitute of the faculty of willing." *

The other works of Abelard are an exposition of the Apostle's and the Athanasian creed ; a history of heresies, a commentary on the epistle to the Romans ; some sermons, and answers to certain problems and questions on difficult passages in scripture, proposed to him by Heloise. To these may be added his letters, in which, as also in his other productions, the acute, inquisitive spirit is always visible, which rendered him so conspicuous as a logician, but tempered by those deep and passionate feelings, which characterised him as a man. St. Bernard brought the result of his enquiries, with the character of Abelard's opinions, before the council of Sens, in the year 1140 ; and the works of the dialectician were condemned as before. He appealed from this decision to Rome ; but the pope confirmed the sentence, and forbade the further publication of his sentiments under any form whatever. Abelard, on this, prepared a formal defence of the doctrines he had taught, and set out on his way to Rome, to establish, in person, his claims to indulgence. In his way, however, by Clugni, the abbot, Peter the Venerable, pressed him into his monastery, and effected a reconciliation between him and St. Bernard. Exhausted with the labours and anxieties of his life, it required little persuasion to induce him to remain contented with the home he had thus found. His strength now rapidly declined ; and, towards the close of his days, he was sent to the convent of St. Marcel, near Châlons-sur-Saone, the beautiful scenery and salubrious climate of which district, it was hoped, would soothe the infirmities which weighed him down. He died in 1142, at the age of sixty-three, leaving behind him the reputation of having been the most learned and the most acute, as well as the first of those scholars who brought into full and systematic action the powerful machinery of dialectics. †

* Dupin, *Ecc'cs. Hist. of Twelfth Cent.*

† Fleury. Bayle, art. ABELARD.

Gillebert de la Porrée was another of those theologians who distinguished themselves by endeavouring to explain the doctrine of the Trinity, and who, in making the attempt, filled the world with crude notions, which it only required some injudicious act of zeal or tyranny to establish as so many separate heresies. But there were not wanting supporters of heterodoxy of a more formidable character to disturb the church in these days. The Cathari, a people whose system appears to have been a mixture of Gnostic or Manichæan doctrines, with such principles as could be gathered from the confused dogmas of later superstition, had begun to be formidable in the preceding century: in this they established themselves as a church; and from them proceeded many of those minor sects, which long continued, with a suspicious mixture of freedom and mystery, to make war on the church at large. Care, however, is to be taken that we confound not the mere licentious advocates of opposition, the inventors of systems, who knew not how to calculate the relations of circumstances and seasons, with the sober though zealous preachers of reform. Among these, in the middle ages, we may fairly place Peter de Bruys, the founder of the sect called, after his name, Petrobrussians; and, in some respects, the monk Henry, the author of the sect of Henricians: while the unfortunate Arnold of Brescia is chiefly recollected for his daring contempt of all the established orders, and his infamous crucifixion by the Roman præfect. The fate of Basilus, who is supposed to have founded the Manichæan sect of the Bogomiles in the East, was equally miserable, — the persecuted heresiarch being burnt, as already noticed, by the emperor Alexius Comnenus. It was in this century also the Waldenses had their commencement; but we defer the notice of their opinions to the following chapter, where the principles which inspired them will be seen producing more decided and important results.

The monastic system was still rapidly on the increase throughout this age, and several new orders, those of

Fontevraud, of the Carmelites, the brothers of Premontr  in Picardy, and others, arose to offer new incitements to the devout to leave the world and its cares for a life of meditation. Mysticism, which had now its regular and recognised teachers, greatly contributed to this advancement of the monastic institutions: it furnished reasons for their establishment; nursed those feelings which give delight to solitude; and, filling the narrowest cell with bright and perpetual visions of heavenly beatitude, made every inmate of the cloisters, who had a heart to feel, and a spirit free from sensual thralldom, the eloquent defender of the course he had adopted.

But, over the whole face of society, agitated as it was by a vast variety of passions and intentions, papal superstition and tyranny spread their gloomy veil. No act or determination was left to the natural impulse of the mind, or the arguments of pure scriptural truth. Whatever was good had first to be made the adopted child of Rome; and for that adoption it frequently paid what was most necessary to its nature. Thus repentance was converted into penance; and thus the wholesome discipline of old times was again commuted for the payment of money; till at length was begun the regular system of indulgences, or the sale of Christ's mercy for the gold and silver of the sinner — the monstrous offspring of the twelfth century, and of the church, advanced to almost the last degree of spiritual apostasy.

CHAP. XX.

ROMAN PONTIFFS. — THEIR CHARACTER AND DISPUTES. — STATE OF THE GREEK CHURCH. — REVIVAL OF LEARNING. — ORIGIN OF THE DOMINICANS AND FRANCISCANS. — THE WALDENSES.

RAPID as had been the progress of the church of Rome in former ages, the extension of its power, and the increase of its wealth, in the present century, must still be contemplated with wonder. Innocent III., who ascended the throne in the year 1198, began his pontificate with an act which plainly indicated the line of conduct he intended to pursue. Hitherto, the chief magistrate of Rome had received investiture from the hands of the temporal sovereign, whose minister and representative he properly was ; but Innocent assumed the right of investing him as a dependant upon the church ; and having thus evinced the boldness of his designs, he immediately began to reduce those cities and territories to obedience which had been separated from the see under former pontiffs. These proceedings were followed up by others of a similar tendency. Casting his eyes over the whole of Christendom, he seemed to hold the sceptre of universal monarchy, and to have it in his power, whenever he chose to put forth the strength of his arm, to humble monarchs to the dust. We remarked, in an early portion of this history, that it was the weakness of the civil magistrate which opened the way to the aggressions of ecclesiastical ambition : and of this we have signal proofs in the events of the thirteenth century. While the monarch of a country had the natural support to be looked for from a people not injured in their rights, but preserved from anarchy and its attendant evils, by his sway, the Roman pontiffs could

make no effectual impression on the nation; but when his imbecillity or his vices prevailed, the grasping hand of St. Peter's successor held up the crown as its prize, till the people themselves recovered it by the efforts of a just indignation. To the English reader, the struggle between Innocent III. and the weak and wicked John, is sufficiently familiar to excuse our barely alluding to the contest as illustrative of this point. It was in the reign of this monarch that the Roman pontiff first ventured to make a kingdom tributary, by way of vassalage, to the crosier: and it was probably from the wonderful success with which his legate in England at this time drained the purses of the inhabitants, that he and his successors derived encouragement to pursue that system of extortion which was to fill the papal treasury with unheard-of wealth.*

Innocent, while thus engaged in promoting the temporal grandeur of the papacy, was not less energetic in impressing the minds of men with the importance of those undertakings which may, and must, in a great degree, be ascribed to the workings of a generous enthusiasm. The dissensions which existed between the captains who had led successive bands of crusaders to Palestine, together with the necessary difficulties in the way of permanent success, had again reduced the Holy Land to a state of bondage. In Europe, moreover, the flame which at first lit up all hearts and countenances at the mention of Jerusalem in bondage, was beaming faint and dim; and Innocent, when he undertook to revive it, found himself obliged to make the most strenuous exertions among the clergy themselves, before they shewed any signs of willingness to aid in the formation of a new armament. But his influence was everywhere felt. He believed that in himself alone was vested the right of anointing kings, and consecrating bishops; that his sentence was sufficient to dethrone the mightiest monarch; and that according to

* Fleury. Basnage. Muratori, *Annal. d'Italia*, an. 1216.

his dictation ought to be the punishment allotted to the reprobate. The very assertion of rights like these is so daring an experiment, that he who begins it cannot fail of either sinking at once under the scorn of his fellow beings, or of gathering inconceivable courage and confidence from the very sense of his own determined boldness, in making the attempt.

This great defender of papal usurpations died soon after publishing from the pulpit a sentence of excommunication against prince Louis of France, for invading England, and while he was preparing a similar anathema against king Philip himself. His successor, Honorius III., who reigned eleven years, was equally ardent in the pursuit of the objects which had occupied his ambitious mind, but possessed a very small portion of his talents. Gregory IX., who was raised to the papedom from the see of Ostia, manifested the same inclination as both his predecessors to advance the grandeur of the church ; and he resembled Innocent as much in force of intellect as in purpose. The crusade, which had been proclaimed, required the aid of the imperial troops ; and the emperor Frederic, to make his peace with Rome, had already entered into a solemn engagement to proceed forthwith to Syria. An attack of sickness was urged as an excuse for the non-performance of the vow thus taken ; but Gregory refused to credit the monarch's assertion, and he delayed not to pronounce him excommunicated. Hostilities were thus at once recommenced between the head of the church and the sovereign authority of the state. But Frederic treated the proclamation of the pontiff with scorn, and retaliated by exhorting the people of Rome to separate themselves from so unworthy a minister of spiritual things ; a method of proceeding which he continued to pursue even after a reconciliation had been seemingly established. By these means, Gregory was driven to the humiliating necessity of abandoning Rome, and asking help from the very man by whose machinations he had been reduced.

But his restless and ambitious mind would not suffer him to rest even after this warning. He again excommunicated Frederic; and the remainder of his days was spent in the vain endeavour to rouse the other sovereigns of Europe to assist him in dethroning his rival.

A. D. 241. The death of Celestine IV., a few days after his election, threw the college of cardinals into confusion; and for more than a year and a half the pontifical throne was left unoccupied. Frederic, who looked with some anxiety for the result of their measures, appears to have fathomed the true reason of their delay in proceeding to the election of a pontiff. "You all desire," said he, "to obtain the dignity; and your passions, not the merit of the candidate, alone determine you in your choice. Your jealousy makes you wish the death of your associate, instead of prompting you to elevate him to the throne!" This remonstrance he followed up by menaces of invasion; and his threats failing to hasten the cardinals in their decision, he sent a large body of troops to Rome, with orders to lay waste the whole of the surrounding territory. The people saved themselves from the swords of the invaders by a firm but humble representation that they had no share in the election of the pontiff, and, consequently, ought not to suffer for the evils which had resulted from the delay of the cardinals. But the lands belonging to the church and its wealthy dignitaries were devastated without mercy; and the electors, finding themselves constrained to sacrifice their mutual jealousies to the necessity of the case, at length chose the cardinal Fiesco; who immediately assumed the title of Innocent IV. The friendship which had long existed between Fiesco and the emperor seemed to promise a speedy restoration of tranquillity; but Frederic is said to have expressed his fears that though, as a cardinal, Fiesco had been his friend, as a pope, he would be his enemy. His apprehensions proved true. The demands which he made

were resolutely refused ; the excommunication remained in force as before ; and so little was the confidence which existed either on the one side or the other, that Innocent, instead of meeting Frederic at the place which had been named for an interview, took horse in the middle of the night, and fled with all speed to the coast ; where he entered a galley, which conveyed him to his native city of Genoa. Thence he despatched messengers to the courts of France and England to require supplies ; and, addressing himself to the monks of Cisteaux, he besought them to make his necessities known to their monarch, and to obtain him permission to seek, if necessary, an asylum in his kingdom. St. Louis, a monarch who richly deserved the highest title which the church could deem it lawful to give, was then on the throne of France, and happened to visit the monastery of Cisteaux soon after the arrival of the pontiff's letter. In his answer to the petition thus preferred, he spoke with equal piety and prudence. He desired (he said) to defend the church by every means in his power, and would receive the pope, if his barons, whose advice, as a king of France, he was bound to follow, should consent to his so doing. The barons, however, on being consulted, refused in the strongest terms to accord the required permission ; intimating that, not only would a vast expenditure be the consequence of his visit, but that the royal dignity and the public peace might both be injured by his residence among them. He had no better fortune in his applications to the king of England. The flattery with which his letters abounded was rendered null by the clear-headed remark of the nobles, " We are already too much infested with Roman usurers and simonists to let the pope come in person to pillage our church and our country." *

Innocent, at length, found a safe retreat in Lyons, which was then an independent city, under the go-

vernment of its own archbishop. There he held a council; repeated the sentence of excommunication against Frederic, and, having declared his poverty, received many valuable demonstrations of affection from the rich lords and prelates who visited him in his retirement. His spirit, thus supported, was urged on by rancorous pride to attempt the complete ruin of his enemy. For this purpose he wrote to several princes, exhorting them to invade the emperor's dominions, or to break off the alliance which they might have formed with his states. The answer of the sultan of Egypt, whom he addressed on the occasion, contained a severe reproof. "You speak," said the follower of Mahomet, "of Jesus Christ: we know him better than you know him; and we honour him more than you honour him."

Frederic was not indifferent to the attempts thus made against his life and dignity; nor did his partisans want inclination to revenge the insults put upon their master. The pope was followed to Lyons by some Italian gentlemen, who were only seized in time to save him from their daggers. On being examined, they confessed their intentions, and added, that there were forty more who had made a vow to destroy him, and that not even the death of the emperor should make them desist from their intention. Innocent trembled more like a guilty tyrant than a Christian bishop at this declaration, and thenceforth remained closely concealed in his chamber, which was, night and day, guarded by fifty soldiers. The fears which he thus felt for his safety were greatly increased by the intelligence brought him from Italy that the bishop of Arezzo, who had been taken while bearing arms against the emperor, had been hung like a common malefactor. But the death of Frederic, which happened in the year 1150, relieved him from his apprehensions, and the following spring he returned to Italy. Genoa, Milan, and Naples, which he successively visited, poured out their vast population to hail his approach; and at his death,

which took place in 1154, he was interred in the cathedral of the last-mentioned city. His latter days were troubled with fears respecting the progress of Manfred, the natural son of Frederic; and his whole history exhibits, in the most powerful manner, the evils which the Roman pontiffs brought personally upon themselves by their obstinate pride and ambition.

Alexander IV. experienced not less than his predecessor the full weight of these evils. Not only did this ill-judging pontiff charge himself with the care of resisting the arms of a young and victorious prince, but he ventured on measures which could not fail of arming the clergy, as well as sovereigns, against him. England had been long overrun with Italian ecclesiastics; who, taking the basest advantage of the reverence shown to Rome and its clergy, possessed themselves of the richest benefices of the national church. Seval, the archbishop of York, ventured to resist the encroachments; and Alexander published against him a sentence of excommunication. By these, and similar measures, he rendered himself universally odious: the attempts he made to reform abuses were treated with contempt: he was obliged to flee from Rome to avoid the dangerous resentment of the populace; and, at last, died at Viterbo, where he and several of the cardinals had taken up their abode.*

The pontificate of Urban IV., whom the exiled cardinals elected in their despair of finding one of their body better qualified for the dignity, was of only three years' duration, and produced no event of importance. Clement IV. was chosen during his absence as pontifical legate in England; and he expressed in the strongest terms that could be employed his grief at an event which so many of his order would, in their own case, have regarded with unmixed delight. His letter to his nephew, on the occasion, contains instruction for elevated churchmen of all ages and countries. "If you wish to exalt your views, expect no help from us: we would

A.D.

1261.

* Fleury.

not that our elevation should inspire those who belong to us with pride." The character he preserved throughout his pontificate was in exact conformity with the humility and firmness he expressed at its commencement. His situation compelled him to take part in the disputes between the several aspirants to the crown of Sicily, which he conferred on Charles of Anjou; but had he lived in times more favourable to improvement, his piety and good sense would have rendered him a useful pastor to that church which he could now so imperfectly control.

Thibault, archdeacon of Liège, who took the title of Gregory X., was, at the time of his election, absent on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; and, on ascending the pontifical throne, his first anxiety was to perform the promise he had made to the afflicted Christians of Syria, that the earliest exertions of his new authority should be in their favour. We pass over the short pontificates of Innocent V., Adrian V., and John XXI., as not offering any thing worthy of particular mention. The last named pope was a man of extensive erudition, and he promised himself a long enjoyment of his dignity; but he perished by the falling of a room which he had had constructed for his private use near his palace at Viterbo. Nicholas III. was also a man of considerable ability, but disgraced his name, and abused the privileges of his station, by lavishing on his friends and relatives the treasures which had been collected under the pretence of promoting the cause of God and the Gospel. At his death, which occurred about three years after his elevation, the cardinals again found it difficult to determine on the choice of a successor to the papal chair. Six months passed away in useless disputes on the subject; at length, the cardinal of St. Cecilia was elevated to the vacant dignity, and he assumed the title of Martin IV. He had scarcely ascended the throne, when the affairs of Sicily again involved all Europe in confusion. Charles of Anjou had rendered himself odious to the people by his insolence and exactions.

The name of a Frenchman was become a by-word among them for whatever merited their hate and their vengeance; and, by one dreadful effort of rage, they laid every follower of their oppressor, numerous as they were, bleeding on the ground. Women and children, the aged and the infirm, fell in the general slaughter; and the Sicilian vespers have been ever pointed to in the history of nations as one of the most signal and terrible instances of a people's retributive vengeance. Martin and his cardinals, however, continued the firm supporters of Charles of Anjou. The king of Aragon, who hastened to take possession of the island, was met by threats of excommunication, which were even extended to the Greek emperor, whom the pontiff suspected of having promoted the late revolt. But his menaces produced no effect; and the king of Aragon treated them with scornful ridicule, though they were at last carried to the extent of the formal publication of a crusade against him, and the transfer, so far as a proclamation could transfer it, of his kingdom of Aragon to the son of the French king.*

Honorius IV. and Nicholas IV. performed nothing of importance. The papal chair remained unoccupied after the death of the latter more than two years; and would have continued longer empty, but for the exertions of the cardinal Caietan, who one day informed his associates, that it had been revealed to a holy man, that the vengeance of God would speedily burst upon Rome if a pontiff was not elected without farther delay. Some of the cardinals present remarked, that the holy man alluded to must be Peter di Murone, who, a poor and obscure peasant by birth, had rendered himself distinguished by his piety and austerities. The name of the recluse was no sooner pronounced, than it entered the minds of several of the cardinals present that no one could be elevated to the pontifical throne with better claims to veneration than Peter. This idea, though at first rejected as wild and capricious, was soon adopted by the

* Muratori.

whole college ; and a deputation was sent to acquaint the hermit with his election. His residence was a cell cut in the rock among the mountains of Abruzzi ; and the archbishop of Lyons, who headed the deputation, and his companions, could with difficulty ascend the precipitous path by which it was approached. When they arrived at the door of the cell, they perceived, through the grating, an infirm old man, whose eyes were red with weeping, and who had all the appearance of one bowed down with sorrow and anxiety. Peter, indeed, had just before received intelligence of his election ; and as the event could scarcely be regarded any otherwise than as a miracle, he felt all the awe which the belief of a special interference of heaven would naturally inspire. To the deputies who, prostrating themselves on the earth, entreated him to accept the dignity, he replied, that he must consult God ; and, having taken the degree of his election through the window of the cell, he retired, and prayed. On returning to the deputies, he informed them that he submitted to the will of God and the church.*

The news of Peter's election produced the most lively excitement throughout the country ; and his progress was marked by throngs of curious and devout spectators. He entered the town of Aquila riding on an ass, the bridle of which was held by two sovereigns, Charles Martel, titular king of Hungary, and his son, the king of Sicily. On ascending the throne, he assumed the name of Celestine V. ; and exhibited, in the whole of his conduct, the same humility as that which he had manifested in his mountain retreat. But he was too ignorant of the passions which ordinarily govern mankind to know how to hold them in subjection ; and the pontifical court was too corrupt to be ruled by any other means than those of sound policy, or corrupt bribery. For the one he wanted capacity ; for the other he was too good and holy. In most instances, therefore, he was directed by the counsels of those who had their

* Fleury. Muratori.

own purposes to serve ; and in those in which he followed his personal wishes, he was almost sure to offend his proud and interested courtiers. This was the case when he created twelve new cardinals ; and when he bestowed certain privileges on the little community, which had formed itself round his cell on the mountains, and to the members of which he now gave the name of Celestines. The dissatisfaction thus produced speedily became known to him ; and, readily meeting the wishes he had heard expressed, he resolved to resign his dignity, and again seek the peace and happiness of which he had been deprived. This determination he carried into effect by reading his resignation in full conclave ; and even those who had most desired his removal, could not refrain from tears, when they beheld him hasten, with mild and benignant aspect, to lay aside all the ensigns of his dignity, for the coarse mantle of the solitary monk.

The vacancy thus created was supplied by the immediate election of cardinal Caiëtan, who assumed the title of Boniface VIII. But doubts were entertained by many skilful canonists, whether a pope could lawfully resign his dignity ; and Boniface himself, influenced by the same suspicion, had recourse to the base expedient of keeping the aged Peter in close confinement in a tower of his castle. There the unfortunate and venerable hermit, who had been all his life accustomed to the free air of the mountains, continued to languish, without a murmur at his hard destiny, for ten months ; when death carried him to his reward. Boniface obtained no advantage by the final removal of the late pope. Many of the most powerful men in Rome, at the head of whom was the cardinal Colonna, openly disputed his right to the papacy. In this they were supported by the king of France ; and the century closed amid angry and fatal disputes, and with signs of coming troubles, which were not concealed by the solemn splendour of the jubilee, then first established, or the proclamation of a universal remission of sins, with which

the pontiff rejoiced the faithful worshippers at the shrine of St. Peter.

The affairs of the Eastern church became, in this century, so mixed up with political events, that we must be contented with a brief allusion to those circumstances which principally serve to mark its condition. It had been early discovered by the Greek emperors, that the crusades would be to them a continual source of trouble and danger. This was especially the case in the present century : Alexius trembled for the safety of his throne, and applied to Innocent III. for protection against the expected ravages of the invading army. The means of acquiring a new accession to his influence, which this afforded the pontiff, was not lost sight of ; and the Greek empire might thenceforward be regarded as an easy prey for European adventure. There was too much ambition, too great a thirst both for wealth and glory at this time, among the knights and barons of the West, to let such a prize lay long unseized. In the year 1204, Constantinople was reduced to the subjection of the Latins ; and Baldwin, count of Flanders, was crowned emperor of the East. His reign was of short continuance : the Greeks indignant at his pride, made an alliance with the king of Bulgaria ; and the first battle decided his fate. He was taken prisoner, loaded with chains, and thrown into a dungeon, where he died.

At Nice, where the newly elected emperor, Theodore Lascaris, held his court, the Greek church was still upheld, with much of its ancient splendour ; and there it was that the four mendicant friars, whom Gregory IX. had sent as mediators between the two churches, were received by the great body of the Eastern clergy. But the conference terminated without effect. The points in dispute were, the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, and the use of unleavened bread in the sacrament of the communion ; on neither of which any compromise could be admitted by the contending parties. Equally unsuccessful was the attempt made by Alexander IV. to effect a reconciliation. The demands put

forward on his side amounted to the complete subjection of the Greek church to that of Rome ; while those of the Eastern monarch, referring to the full restitution of Constantinople from the hands of the Latins, involved a question respecting rights, over which the pontiff felt he could exercise no efficient controul.

Under Michael Palæologus, Constantinople was retaken, and the French were driven from an empire which they were at no time prepared to govern with wisdom or firmness. The successful monarch embroiled himself with the Roman court by his alleged interference with the affairs of Sicily ; and though by his great and politic exertions a nominal peace was at last established with the Western church*, he was long subjected to the severest censures of the pontiff. His son and successor, Andronicus, was a yet bolder opponent of Rome, and openly proclaimed his unwillingness to continue in communion with its church. In the year 1284, he held a council, in which the patriarch Vecars, and a large number of bishops and archbishops were deposed, on the simple accusation of having promoted the union with Rome. This pretended reconciliation, in fact, had not had the least effect in healing the schism which existed between the two churches. Michael's reign had exhibited perpetual proofs that neither the intentions of the pontiff, nor his own expectations, were fulfilled by the sacrifice which had been made ; and, while so little satisfaction was felt on the part of the contending churches, the Greek empire was thrown, by the policy which had been pursued into indescribable confusion. These circumstances furnished Andronicus with sufficient reasons for the measures he took to annul the union ; and so thoroughly did the feelings of the people correspond with his own on the subject, that, on the day on which it was repealed, they performed a

* This reconciliation took place in the council held at Lyons, in 1274 ; in which the representatives of the Greek church not only acknowledged the primacy of the pontiff, but joined in the use of the words " who proceeds from the Father and the Son." The most eminent men, however, of the Greek church, and, among others, the patriarch himself, refused to obey.

general act of penance, expressive of their sorrow, and of their return to the religion of their fathers.

Amid the disorders thus created by the quarrels of rival churchmen, the active intellect of man still retained its energies ; and the superintending providence of the true Head of the church, so directed its operations, that while darkness, the natural and also the judicial consequence of sin, spread over the face of the earth, and while the rich rewards of truth were denied to those who forsook her simplicity, thought was kept awake, and channels were hewn out for the stream of knowledge whenever it should be ready to flow. It was in this century that the schools of Paris and Bologna first assumed the name of universities. The sciences had hitherto been taught in minute divisions, and were rarely combined in a system of education. They were now united ; their dependance on each other was demonstrated with care and erudition ; and the most distinguished scholars of the time prided themselves on being at once mathematicians, philosophers, lawyers, and theologians. A spirit of emulation was at work in every quarter of Italy, where new academies were continually springing up. Frederic II. was himself a generous and judicious patron of learning. He founded the academy of Naples ; enriched by his munificent liberality that of Padua, and promoted by every means in his power the general cultivation of literature and science. In England and Germany learning was not less cherished, nor less successful. Roger Bacon, especially, carried the study of the natural sciences into practice, and almost founded a system of experimental philosophy.

But, encouraging as was the prospect in these respects, it was sufficiently unpromising in many others. The attempts which men of learning were making to emancipate themselves from the slavery of ignorance were checked and narrowed by the now confirmed reverence for the Aristotelian logic, as the only instrument by which reason could delve in the mines of truth. By the cele-

brated Thomas Aquinas, whose mingled piety and subtlety obtained him the name of the angelic doctor*, the system of dialectics was carried to a degree of perfection which rendered it capable of effecting almost every purpose, as the study of the mind and of theology was then pursued, which the philosophers of the age would wish to effect. But the progress of true knowledge, the study of nature by experiment, and of divinity by the Scriptures and devotional meditation, received thereby an effectual check: the corruptions of superstition remained unsubdued; the abuses which the Roman clergy practised on the people were allowed to multiply with unmodified grossness; and the maxims of philosophy, the results of all that was done and learnt in the schools, were but as minute, luminous ephemera on the floor of the vast temple of superstition.

The rise of the two orders of Dominicans and Franciscans, in this age, gave new importance to all the institutions of monasticism. Dominic, the celebrated founder of the former of these fraternities, was a native of Castile, and early distinguished himself by his abilities and strictness of conduct. Soon after finishing his studies at Placentia, he accompanied the bishop of Osma on a journey to Toulouse, then the chief seat of the Albigenses. Dominic immediately conceived the idea of employing his learning and eloquence in the work of converting the supposed heretics. The bishop of the diocese greatly favoured this idea, and took him to the council of Lateran, where he presented him to pope Innocent, and stated that they were desirous of establishing an order of preachers. The pontiff gave them a favourable answer; and Dominic, according to his advice, began to form his fraternity, and draw up rules for its government. Honorius III. was equally willing to assist him in his design; and he received from that pontiff a bull which formally established it as one of the

* Tiraboschi, *Storia della Let. Ital.* t. iv. p. i. p. 50. It was the custom of the times to confer titles of this kind on men of eminent genius. Thus, Roger Bacon was called the admirable doctor; and Wickliffe, in the next century, the evangelical doctor.

legitimate and recognised orders ; and assigned to its members the especial duty of going about to preach the gospel.

The celebrity of Dominic* was greatly increased by the reports which were early circulated respecting his miraculous power. While at Rome, it is said, he not only cured the sick, but raised the dead to life. A youth named Napoleon, who had lost his life by a fall from his horse, confessed the force of his prayers, and was seen, after he recovered, by those who had witnessed his accident. At another time, he restored a mason to life, who had died by a fall ; and soon after, chased into their native darkness seven devils, who possessed an unfortunate woman in his congregation. Every country in Europe resounded with the fame of these miracles ; and branches of his order were established in France, Germany, England, and Spain. As master-general of this fraternity, he possessed a power which might have satisfied the most ambitious ; but he was sincere in his contempt for wealth : and had the order (established as it was on the principle that poverty, free from temptation, is better than riches ; and that the world has still to be converted by the preaching of the gospel) been guided, and governed by the intentions of the founder, it might have proved a blessing for many ages, as it certainly would to that in which it arose. Jourdain, who succeeded St. Dominic as master-general of the order, was a man of splendid talents, as well as earnest piety. His discourses were listened to with the most eager attention ; and the eloquence with which he taught the principles on which he and his brethren had framed their lives, together with the just reputation they enjoyed for their singular purity of character, brought daily new converts to the order. A few years diminished the zeal and virtue of the fraternity ; but it continued to increase in influence ; and the fierceness with which it engaged in the work of persecution has given it an infamous and more enduring reputation than the good deeds of its infancy.

* See the life of this remarkable man in Butler, Fleury, and others.

St. Francis was born at Assisi in Umbria, towards the close of the twelfth century ; and in his youth he displayed a thoughtfulness and charity, which proved that he had been deeply impressed by the spirit of religion. His father, who was a merchant, intended to bring him up to his profession ; but Francis, having found an aged priest in the ruined church of St. Damian, sold his horse to furnish money for the repairs of the dilapidated building, and resolved never to quit the asylum, and the monitor he had thus discovered. The rage of his father subjected him to the most cruel treatment in the support of the determination he had taken : but he remained firm ; and, having declared before the bishop of Assisi, his willingness to resign all claims upon his father, he hastened into the neighbouring forests, where he lived for some time in complete solitude. The convictions of religion grew and quickened within him, as he wandered along the gloomy paths of his retreat, and he at length went forth to preach those doctrines to the world, which formed at once his own guide and solace. Multitudes flocked to hear him ; but it was not till after some time that he gathered around him seven zealous and devoted followers, who were ready, with the same enthusiasm as himself, to resign every thing for the sake of God and the gospel. With these, however, he formed a little fraternity, which he directed by a set of rules drawn from the precepts of Christ and his apostles, and to which he soon after obtained the sanction of the pope. Thus was established the order of Minor Friars, the humble title it derived from the meekness and poverty of its founder. It soon became numerous and venerated ; and its members were to be found in the remotest parts of Africa and the East, endangering their lives to make known the truths of Christ's religion. Francis himself visited Syria three times, in the course of his wanderings ; and wherever he came his virtues were venerated by all who had the generosity to observe his conduct with candour. The rules he laid down for the conduct of his brethren, like those of

Dominic, were calculated to promote the purest piety ; and it is to be ascribed to the weakness and corruption of human nature, not to any inherent error in the systems themselves, that the orders established by these celebrated men so rapidly degenerated into vice. The first source of the evils which infected them, after the death of their founders, was the fierce and violent jealousy they conceived against each other. Their disputes were carried on with all the virulence of the most factious spirit ; and, when they ceased from assailing each other, they turned to aggressions on the rights and privileges of independent churches. In these proceedings the Roman pontiffs, who at once recognised their importance as barriers between the papacy and its enemies, were always ready to lend them support ; and they thus continued to increase, till the very time of the reformation, in wealth, though called mendicants ; and in licentiousness, though established for the sole purpose of preaching the gospel.

Other orders arose in this age, such as the Flagellants who, not satisfied with the mortification practised by the common rules of asceticism, inflicted on themselves the most severe scourgings ; — the spiritual Franciscans, the Fratricelli, and the Beguins ; — all of which derived the greater part of their principles from the institution of St. Francis, but carried their ideas of perfection to a more extravagant height.

No remarkable heresy had its origin in this century. The East was too constantly agitated to let the seeds of religious dispute come to maturity in its soil ; and the existence of a powerful and rapidly increasing sect was equally sufficient to prevent the appearance of new ones in the West. This dominant sect was that of the Waldenses. The Albigenses, who are generally stated to have been a branch of the Paulicians of Bulgaria, had become divided into several minor sects, and appear to have existed at this period under the names of the Cathari and others, the precise nature of whose doctrines has defied the research of the most diligent

historians.* It is impossible to determine whether or not the Waldenses were indebted to the pre-existence of these sects for any portion of their opinions: it is most probable they were not.† Their founder, Peter Waldo, was a plain, intelligent, and deeply devout citizen of Lyons; and, corrupted as had been the sources of knowledge, there was still enough of light left for such men as Waldo to discover the way to more. Peter's thoughts were first directed to religion by the sudden death of one of his friends, as he sat at dinner with him in his house; and the means he employed to awaken others to a sense of their ignorance and danger, were those authorised equally by prudence and piety. Either availing himself of some partial translation of the Scriptures, or making a version himself, he appealed to the

* Basnage, Hist. de l'Eglise.

† As some obscurity exists in the accounts given of the Waldenses, from the various names under which they existed, the following account of the origin of their different appellations may be of service to the reader:—

“And, first, therefore, they called them, from *Waldo*, a citizen of *Lions*, *Waldenses*: from the country of *Albi*, *Albigenses*.

And because those who adhered to the doctrine of *Waldo* departed from *Lions* despoiled of all human means, the most part having left their goods behind them, they, in derision, called them *the beggars of Lions*.

In *Dauphiné* they were, in mockery, called *chainards*, or dogs.

And because a part of them passed the *Alps*, they were called *tramountaines*.

From one of the disciples of *Waldo*, named *Joseph*, who preached in *Dauphine*, in the diocese of *Dye*, they were styled *Josephists*.

In *England*, *Lollards*, from one *Lollard*, who taught there.

From two priests, who taught the doctrine of *Waldo* in *Languedoc*, named *Henry* and *Esperon*, they were called *Henricians* and *Esperonists*.

From one of their pastors, who preached among the *Albigenses*, named *Arnold Hot*, they were called *Arnoldists*.

In *Provence* they were called *Siccars*, from a word of pedler's French, which signifies cut-purses.

In *Italy* they were styled *Fratricelli*, which is as much as to say, of the same brotherhood; because they lived, like brethren, in true concord.

And because they observed no other day of rest besides *Sunday*, they called them *Insabathos*, which is as much as to say, regarding no sabbaths.

By reason that they were exposed to continual sufferings, from the Latin word *pati*, which signifies to suffer, they were termed *Paterins*.

And, seeing that they fled from place to place like poor pilgrims, they were named *Passagenes*.

In *Germany* they were nicknamed *Gazares*, a word which signifies execrable, and flagitiously wicked.

In *Flanders* they were called *Turlupins*; that is to say, inhabitants with wolves; because, by reason of persecutions, they were often constrained to dwell in woods and deserts.

Sometimes they called them after the names of the regions and countries wherein they dwelt; as, from *Albi*, *Albigenses*; from *Toulouse*, *Toulousians*; from *Lombardy*, *Lombards*; from *Picardy*, *Picards*; from *Lions*, *Lionists*; from *Bohemia*, *Bohemians*.”—Perrin's Hist. of Waldenses, b. i. p. 3, 4.

word of God, and showed that the clergy of the church of Rome had long neglected to feed the people with the bread of life. His language and opinions soon became known to the archbishop of Lyons; and, after remaining concealed for three years among his friends, he was obliged to leave the city, and make his escape, first into Dauphiny, and then into Picardy. In these provinces he continued to preach with unceasing zeal and success: the inhabitants flocked from all parts to listen to his doctrine, so comforting, so clear and authoritative, when compared with that of the established preaching. Vast congregations were thus formed; and the spiritual rulers of France and Italy saw with astonishment and dismay the disciples of Waldo, and the long-established sect of the Vaudois, rapidly coalescing into one great and growing body.

It was not to be supposed that Rome or its partisans would remain quiet, while the opposers of its corruptions were thus proceeding. The new order of Dominicans furnished the pope with instruments ready prepared to his hand. Pierre de Castelnau, archdeacon of Maguelonne, and Rainier, a Cistercian monk, had received an order from Innocent III. to make the circuit of the infected provinces, and employ the most vigorous means for the extirpation of the heretics. Dominic, who had then but lately established his order, willingly joined himself to these delegates of the pontifical court. They began the exercise of their functions with stern and relentless zeal. Raymond of Toulouse and his subjects fell especially under their scourge: and the indignant nobleman appears to have freed himself from the savage vituperations of the head of the party by a sudden act of vengeance.

The death of Pierre de Castelnau greatly incensed the pontiff; and persecution assumed its most terrific forms. Multitudes fell slaughtered by the armed bands sent against them; and at length, — that is in the year 1229, — a council of inquisitors was formally established, to take cognizance of heresy, and punish it

wherever found.* This embryo of the institution so celebrated for its iniquitous deeds in southern Europe,

* The following are the edicts which were published by pope Honorius III. and the emperor Frederic II., at the instigation of the pontiff. They are regarded as the foundation of the laws on which the inquisition afterwards proceeded : —

“ To abolish the malignity of divers heresies, which, of late time, are sprung up in most parts of the world, it is but fitting that the power committed to the church should be awakened, that, by the concurring assistance of the imperial strength, both the insolence and malapertness of the heretics, in their false designs, may be crushed, and the truth of catholic simplicity, shining forth in the holy church, may demonstrate her pure and free from the execrableness of their false doctrines. Wherefore we, being supported by the presence and power of our most dear son, Frederic, *the most illustrious emperor of the Romans, always increaser of the empire*, with the common advice and counsel of our brethren and other patriarchs, archbishops, and many princes, who, from several parts of the world, are met together, do set ourselves against these heretics, who have got different names from the several false doctrines they profess : by the sanction of this present general decree, and by our apostolic authority, according to the tenor of these presents, we condemn all manner of heresy, by what name soever it may be denominated.

“ More particularly we declare all cathari, paterines, and those who call themselves the humbled poor of Lyons, passagenes, Josephines, Arnoldists, to lie under a perpetual anathema ; and because some, under a form of godliness, but denying *the power thereof*, as the apostle saith, assume to themselves the authority of preaching, whereas the same apostle saith, ‘ How shall they preach, except they be sent ? ’ we, therefore, include under the same sentence of a perpetual anathema, all those who, either being forbid or not sent, do, notwithstanding, presume to preach publicly or privately, without any authority, received either from the apostolic see or from the bishops of their respective dioceses ; as, likewise, all those who are not afraid to hold or teach any opinions concerning the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, baptism, the remission of sins, matrimony, or any other sacrament of the church, differing from what the holy church of Rome doth preach and observe ; and, generally, all those whom the same church of Rome, or the several bishops, or the several bishops in their dioceses, with the advice of their clergy, or the clergy themselves, in case of a vacancy of the see, with advice, if need be, of neighbouring bishops, shall judge to be heretics. And we likewise declare all entertainers and defenders of the said heretics, and those that have showed any favour, or given countenance to them, thereby strengthening them in their heresy, whether they be called comforted believers, or perfect, or with whatsoever superstitious names they disguise themselves, to be liable to the same sentence.

“ And though it sometimes happens, that the severity of ecclesiastical discipline, necessary to the coercion of sin, is condemned by those who do not understand the virtue of it, we, notwithstanding, by these presents decree, that whosoever shall be notoriously convicted of these errors, if a clergyman, or one that endeavours to conceal himself under any religious order, he shall be immediately deprived of all prerogative of the church orders ; and so, being divested of all office and benefice, be delivered up to the secular power, to be punished according to demerit, unless, immediately upon his being detected, he voluntarily returns to the truth of the catholic faith, and submits publicly to abjure his errors, at the discretion of the bishop of the diocese, and to make suitable satisfaction. And as for a layman who shall be found guilty, either publicly or privately, of any of the aforesaid crimes, unless by abjuring his heresy, and making satisfaction, he immediately returns to the orthodox faith, we decree him to be left to the sentence of the secular judge, to receive condign punishment according to the quality of his offence.

“ And as for those who are taken notice of by the church as suspected of

consisted, at first, of a priest and three laymen ; but four years afterwards, Gregory IX. transmitted the com-

heresy, except, at the bishop's command, they give full evidence of their innocence, according to the degree of suspicion against them, and quality of their persons, they shall all be liable to the same sentence. But those who, after having abjured their errors, or cleared themselves, upon examination, to their bishop, shall be found to have relapsed into their abjured heresy ; we decree, that, without any further hearing, they be forthwith delivered up to the secular power, and their goods confiscated to the use of the church.

"And we further decree, that this excommunication, in which our will is that all heretics be included, be, by all patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, renewed and repeated in all the chief festivals, and on any public solemnity, or upon any other occasion, to the glory of God, and the putting a stop to all heretical pravity ; ordering, by our apostolical authority, that if any bishop be found wanting or slow herein, he be suspended, for three years, from his episcopal dignity and administration.

"Furthermore, with the counsel and advice of bishops, and intimation of the emperor and princes of the empire, we do add, that every archbishop or bishop, either in his own person or by his archdeacon, or by other honest and fit persons, shall, once or twice in the year, visit the parish in which it is reported heretics dwell, and there cause two or three men of good credit, or, if need be, the whole neighbourhood, to swear, that if they know of any heretics there, or any that frequent private meetings, or differ from the common conversation of mankind, either in life or manners, they will signify the same to the bishop or archdeacon. The bishop also, or archdeacon, shall summon before them the parties accused, who, except they at their discretion, according to the custom of the country, do clear themselves of the guilt laid to their charge ; or if, after having so cleared themselves, they relapse again to their former unbelief, shall be punished at the bishop's discretion. And if any of them, by a damned superstition, shall refuse to swear, that alone shall suffice to make them heretics convict, and liable to the punishments before mentioned.

"We ordain further, that all earls, barons, governors, and consuls of cities and other places, in pursuance of the communion of the respective archbishops and bishops, shall promise, upon oath, that in all these particulars, whenever they are thereto required, they will powerfully and effectually assist the church against heretics and their accomplices, and endeavour faithfully, according to their office and power, to execute the ecclesiastical and imperial statutes concerning the matters herein mentioned.

"But, if any of them shall refuse to observe this, they shall be deprived of their honours and charges, and be rendered incapable of receiving others, and, moreover, be involved in the sentence of excommunication, and their goods be confiscated to the use of the church. And if any city shall refuse to yield obedience to these decretal constitutions ; or that, contrary to the episcopal communion, they shall neglect to punish opposers ; we ordain the same to be excluded from all commerce with other cities, and to be deprived of the episcopal dignity.

"We likewise decree, that all favourers of heretics, as men stigmatised with perpetual infamy, shall be incapable of being attorneys or witnesses, or of bearing any public office whatsoever. And as for those who are exempt from the law of *diocesan* jurisdiction, as being immediately under the jurisdiction of the apostolic see, nevertheless, as to these constitutions against heretics, we will that they be subject to the judgment of the archbishop and bishops, and that, in this case, they yield obedience to them, as to the delegates of the apostolic see, the immunity of their privileges notwithstanding." — *Allin, Hist. of Ancient Vaudois*, p. 281.

The following is the edict published by the emperor, in conformity with the above address of the pontiff :

mission to the Dominicans, and they were settled at Toulouse as the chief seat of the holy office. The

"Frederic, by the grace of God emperor of the Romans, always increaser of the empire, to all marquesses, earls, and all people under our government, health and grace.

"Forasmuch, as nothing can conduce more to the honour of the empire and praise of the emperor, than by the purging away of error, and the abrogating of some unjust statutes, to procure the peaceable and flourishing state of the church of God, and secure her liberty:—

"We do condemn to perpetual infamy . . . the cathari, paterines, Leonists, Speronists, Arnoldists, circumcised, and all other heretics of both sexes, by what names soever they are called; commanding their goods to be confiscated, so as never to return to them again, or, by way of inheritance, to devolve to their children; since it is a much more heinous crime to offend the majesty of the eternal God, than any temporal prince. And, as for those who are only suspected of heresy, except at the command of the church, according to the degree of suspicion and quality of the person, they make their innocence to appear by a sufficient vindication of themselves, shall be accounted infamous and outlawed; and if they continue so for a whole year, we condemn them for heretics.

"We also ordain, by this perpetual edict, that all that are in authority consuls and rectors, whatsoever their office may be, do publicly take an oath for defence of the faith; that they will faithfully endeavour, to the utmost of their power, to exterminate all heretics in the places subject to their jurisdiction; so that, from henceforward, as soon as any one shall be taken into any place of power, either perpetual or temporary, he shall be obliged to swear to this article; and that, in case of failure, they shall neither be accounted persons in power or consuls; and we, from thenceforward, declare all their acts and sentences null and void. And in case that any temporal lord, being required and admonished by the church, shall neglect to purge his territories from heretical pravity, after a whole year elapsed from the time of his admonition, we give leave to catholics to possess themselves of his lands; who, after having rooted out the heretics, shall quietly possess the same, and preserve it in piety: provided always, that the rights of the principal lord of the fee be preserved but that the aforesaid law shall be wholly in force against those who have no such superior lords of the fee.

"Moreover, we proscribe all heretics, entertainers and favourers of heretics; firmly ordaining, that as soon as any such, being excommunicated by the church, shall contemptuously refuse to make satisfaction within a year's time, that then he be made infamous by law, and incapable of any office, or of being the member of any council, or of having a voice in the choice of officers, or being a witness: that, moreover, he be deprived of the power of making a will, and of succeeding unto an inheritance. Furthermore, that nobody shall be bound to answer to his complaint or charge, but he be obliged to answer the charge of others against him; and if he be a judge, that his sentence be of no force, and that no causes be brought before him; if he be a lawyer, that his pleading be not admitted; and if a scrivener, that the writings drawn up by him be invalid.

"And we, Honorius, bishop, servant of the servants of God, do praise, approve, and confirm these laws, to continue for ever, which are made by Frederic, emperor of the Romans, our dearest son, for the good of all Christians. And, in case any man, by a presumptuous attempt, being instigated thereto by the enemy of mankind, shall any way endeavour the infraction of them, let him be assured that, by so doing, he will incur the indignation of Almighty God, and of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul."

The following is another ordinance, passed by the king of Aragon, to a similar effect, in 1194.

"Ildephonsus, by the grace of God, king of Aragon, earl of Barcelona, marquess of Provence, to all archbishops, bishops, and other prelates of

Waldenses, in common with the inhabitants of the valleys, were pursued by the new inquisitors in the most ruthless manner. Crusades were preached and undertaken against them, as against foreign infidels: and for three centuries the districts in which they were chiefly settled, afforded continual examples of sanguinary oppression on the one side, and noble endurance on the other.

the church of God, earls, viscounts, knights, and to all people of his kingdom, or belonging to his dominions, wisheth health, and the sound observance of Christian religion.

“Forasmuch as it has pleased God to set us over his people, it is but fit and just, that according to our might we should be continually solicitous for the welfare and defence of the same; wherefore we, in imitation of our ancestors, and obedience to the canons, which determine and ordain heretics, as persons cast out from the sight of God and all Catholics, to be condemned and persecuted everywhere; do command and charge the Waldenses, Inzabbati, who otherwise are called the poor of Lyons, and all other heretics who cannot be numbered, being excommunicated from the holy church, adversaries of the cross of Christ, violaters and corrupters of the Christian religion, and the avowed enemies of us and our kingdom, to depart out of our kingdom and all our dominions. Whoever, therefore, from this day forwards, shall presume to receive the said Waldenses and lapatati, or any other heretics, of whatsoever profession, into their houses, or to be present at their pernicious sermons, or to afford them meat, or any other favour, shall incur thereby the indignation of Almighty God, as well as ours, and have his goods confiscated, without the remedy of an appeal, and be punished as if he were actually guilty of high treason; and we strictly charge and command, that this our edict and perpetual constitution be publicly read on the Lord’s days by the bishops and other rectors of churches, in all the cities, castles, and towns of our kingdom, and throughout all our dominions, and that the same be observed by vicars, bailiffs, justices, merins, and zernahmedins, and all the people in general; and the aforesaid punishment be inflicted upon all transgressors.

“We will further, that if any person, noble or ignoble, shall in any part of our dominions find any of these wicked wretches, who shall be known to have had three days’ notice of this our edict, that do not forthwith depart, but rather, obstinately staying or lingering, shall any way plague, despitefully use, or distress them (wounding unto death, and maiming of them only excepted), he will, in so doing, act nothing but what will be very grateful and pleasing to us, and shall be so far from fearing to incur any penalty thereby, that he may be sure rather to deserve our favour. Furthermore, we do afford to these wicked miscreants respite (though this in some sort seem contrary to our duty and reason) till the day after All-Saints day; but that all those who either shall not be gone by that time, or at least preparing for their departure, shall be spoiled, beaten, cudgelled, and shamefully ill-treated.”—See Allisc. and Llorente’s, *Histoire Critique de l’Inquisition*.

CHAP. XXI.

SCHISM IN THE CHURCH OF ROME. — RIVAL PONTIFFS. — FIRST
LIGHT OF REFORMATION. — WICKLIFFE. — FATE OF HIS
IMMEDIATE FOLLOWERS. — LORD COBHAM.

THE church of Rome began to reap, in this age, the harvest both of its ambition and its errors. Its wealth and splendour had kept increasing with its corruptions; and it stood surrounded by tributary nations when torn internally by schism and all the evils of incipient decay. Boniface VIII., who occupied the papal throne at the beginning of the century, boldly asserted his right to hold the sceptre as well as the crosier, and would have hurled Philip the Fair from his throne, but for the courage of the monarch, and the firmness and wisdom of his distinguished counsellor, William de Urgaret. The pope, instead of being obeyed, was seized in his residence at Anagni, and died from the violence with which he was treated. His successor, Benedict XI. refrained from these attempts, and the next pontiff, Clement V. was a Frenchman, and wholly devoted to the interests of his country; or, rather, to those of the king and William de Urgaret, who obliged him to reverse all the decrees of Boniface, and even spoke of his disinterring the body of that pontiff to have it publicly burnt. But the most remarkable circumstance in the pontificate of Clement was the establishment of the papal court at Avignon*; a measure which the French monarch had reason for a time to rejoice at, as it brought

A. D.
1400.

* Petrarch was, at this time, in the zenith of his fame, and was impetuous in his exhortations to the pope to return to Rome.

the power of the church in a great degree under the sway of his crown. The change, however, while it opened a wide door to fresh corruptions, was watched with extreme jealousy by the Italian ecclesiastics; and, at the death of Clement, the French and Roman cardinals commenced a contest for the papal chair, which lasted two years. They at length decided in favour of the bishop of Porto; who assumed the title of John XXII., and rendered himself famous by his quarrel with Lewis of Bavaria, and his opinion, that the human soul, in its separate state, could not behold the Godhead itself, but only God in Christ. For the publication of this idea he narrowly escaped deposition and the brand of heresy.

The three succeeding popes, Benedict XII., Clement V., and Gregory XI., were all Frenchmen. To the first belongs the valuable praise of having laboured assiduously to restore peace, and cleanse the church of the manifold corruptions which became every day more visible; the next emulated the worst of his predecessors in pride and avarice: like John XXII., he filled his treasury with gold drawn from the bishoprics, which he unlawfully kept vacant, and from the estates of the noblemen, whom he subjected to his sway by all the arts and menaces of superstition. With the wealth he thus acquired he was enabled to purchase Avignon from the queen of Naples; and that city thus became a part of the dominions of the church. Gregory XI., however, anxious to stop the progress of the schism which was said to be making its way among both the clergy and the people, removed to Rome, and endeavoured, but in vain, to soothe the irritated factions which tore that venerable but now humbled seat of empire. His death, which occurred in the year 1378, aroused the populace to a display of their strength; and they insisted, in a manner which inspired the sacred college with but one feeling, that an Italian only should be raised to the papacy. The archbishop of Bari was, accordingly, elevated to the throne by the title of Urban VI.; but

so far was this measure from pacifying the spirit of disorder which raged through the distracted church, that it tore it asunder with a violence, from the effects of which it never recovered. Urban was wholly unfitted, either by mind or inclination, to repress the evils which had grown to so alarming a height; and his proud, severe temper speedily roused against him a large and powerful party. Thirteen of the French cardinals retired to Anagni, and thence addressed him in an epistle, whereby they declared that, having been elected unlawfully at the clamorous demand of the people, he had no right to the title or dignity of supreme pontiff. This measure of the French cardinals produced no effect on the conduct of Urban; and the sacred college finding his intractable severity increase, a secret resolution was taken to elect another pope. In this determination they were supported by the count of Fondi, the queen of Naples, and other powerful personages. Their measures were prompt and decisive; and the cardinal of Geneva was consecrated supreme pontiff, by the title of Clement VII.

Thus was the schism confirmed which the state of affairs had long threatened; and the Roman church, instead of enjoying the advantages of that union which furnished the great argument for its boasted constitution, was desolated by the rivalry and hate of two, and sometimes three, pretenders to infallible and unlimited sovereignty. Urban VI. dying in 1389, Peter Thomacelli was elected by the remnant of the Italian party, under the name of Boniface IX.; while Clement, who died in 1394, was succeeded by Peter de Luna, a Spaniard, as Benedict XIII. The disorders caused by the obstinacy with which the schism was thus continued, produced the most calamitous effects both in France and Italy. Fraud and rapine were let loose by the arts practised on both sides; and religion seemed destined to be expelled the earth, to make way for the dominant passions of the rival churchmen. At length, after every method had been used to restore peace, by persuading the pontiffs to come to terms, the king of France took

the resolution of summoning a council to consider by what measures the existing evils could be most effectually removed. The council met in 1397; and the following year an edict was published, by which the king declared that he withdrew his dominions altogether from the superintendence and rule of the popes both of Italy and France.

While the church was thus desolated by its rival chiefs, the monastic orders were rapidly increasing in power and wealth. Their influence was felt in every part of Europe; and the clergy saw with equal sorrow and indignation that they were enabled to invade without resistance the most sacred rights of the priesthood. Nor were the violent contentions which existed among the members of the same order without their bad consequences to religion. The wild and dangerous opinions of the several divisions of the Franciscans filled the minds of the ignorant with a thousand incongruous notions; and these, instead of being opposed by the labours of the learned, were, for the most part, encouraged and multiplied in the very nurseries of science and theology themselves. Duns Scotus, the most erudite man of the age, was himself a Franciscan; and his genius was chiefly employed in attacking the system of Aquinas, not because of its inherent weakness, but because he was the great master of the Dominicans. A new division was thus formed; and the Scotists and the Thomists, as the partisans of Scotus and Aquinas were called, gathered under their banners the very men who could have effected the most practical good, by the sound and scriptural preaching of the gospel. There were, however, some few still left to assert the principles of religious and intellectual freedom: among these was Bradwardine, archbishop of Canterbury; who, like Grosteste, bishop of Lincoln, in the preceding century, powerfully evinced the evangelical character of his faith. Nor can we but regret that our limits should oblige us to pass over with a mere allusion the names of Dante and Petrarch, who exercised an influence by their writings,

and by the part they took against the designs of the Roman pontiffs, which amply entitles them to a place among the earliest antagonists of papal corruption.*

But it was in this country that the torch was lit which first showed the nations how to emancipate themselves from the slavery under which they had groaned for so many ages ; and we shall now briefly detail the circumstances which attended the sowing of the seed, the precious fruit of which is still enjoyed in the present purity of our faith, and in the liberty of our church. The celebrated Wickliffe, the great forerunner and herald of the German reformers, was born in the early part of the fourteenth century, and bred up at Oxford ; where he distinguished himself not less by the powers of his mind, and the extent of his erudition, than by his profound piety. His devoted attachment to the philosophical system of Thomas Aquinas made him the warm and energetic opponent of the Franciscans, then established in great force at the university. He succeeded in suppressing many of their encroachments ; and, notwithstanding the hatred with which he was in consequence regarded by the Mendicants, obtained the mastership, first of Baliol College, and then of Canterbury Hall. Thus raised to one of the most important stations in the university, he carried on his attack against the corruptions of the Franciscans with renewed vigour ; and, to his observations on the evils which they had occasioned, began to add the most bitter invectives against the popes. This brought upon him the eyes of all the more bigoted members of the church ; and Langham, the archbishop of Canterbury, fulfilled the wishes of the party, by depriving him of his wardenship of Canterbury Hall. The injustice of this proceeding was evident to all those whose minds were not blinded by the most abject subjection to the power of Rome. Wickliffe

* The general reader will find in the author's *Lives of the Italian Poets* a sufficient account of the actions of these great men to prove how important was the part they took in resisting the vices of the age and of their rulers

himself freely expressed his indignation at the measures pursued against him, and appealed to Urban V. for the reversal of Langham's decree. But his appeal was rejected; and the reformer, urged forward by personal injury, as well as by his preconceived and adopted principles, attacked with more vehemence than ever the Romish hierarchy, its assumed rights and palpable corruptions.

The popularity of the reformer continued to increase with the increase of his zeal. He had admirers in all parts of the kingdom; and the duke of Lancaster, the most powerful man in the state, declared himself his protector. Through the duke the rectory of Lutterworth was presented to him by the crown. This preferment afforded him the means of support; and from his retired parsonage he sent forth some of the strongest invectives against the monks and their great chieftain, the pope, which the world had ever heard. At length, the pontiff roused himself to the task of crushing this daring reformer; and five bulls were successively sent to the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of London, and the university of Oxford. By these it was directed, that Wickliffe should be forthwith apprehended, tried, and punished. The university, after having held a meeting on the subject, had the good sense and courage to reject the demand of the pontiff; and the nation at large was so little inclined to obey them, that the parliament consulted the reformer on the question, whether the money paid to Rome might not be lawfully detained for the exigencies of the state. But these circumstances only served to irritate the clergy more strongly against him; and the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of London, commanded his appearance before them at St. Paul's Cross. The duke of Lancaster readily assured the reformer of his protection in this extremity; and when the day arrived, both the duke and lord Percy, marshal of England, attended him, with their numerous and splendid retinues, to the place of trial. The rancour of the prelates, and the insolent haughtiness

of the nobles, rendered the examination of Wickliffe a scene of violence and confusion; and the popular feelings being aroused by an insult passed on the bishop of London, each party found it necessary to make a speedy retreat.

Wickliffe's system of theology and belief was by this time fully developed; and it was found to touch on all sides the wide circle of papal institutions and papal dogmas: while it denied the right of the bishop of Rome to supremacy over the bishops of other churches, it contended also against the real presence in the sacrament: while it declared the riches amassed by the clergy to be a source of the most deplorable evils, it proved indulgences to be founded on the subversion of all scriptural doctrine; and that the sacrifice of Christ was the one and sufficient atonement for the sins of the world. The adoration of images; the use of extreme unction; the laws against the marriage of priests; and the practices of the Mendicant orders, all came within the reach of this powerful antagonist. And to confirm his opinions; to render that which he knew was essential to a saving faith manifest to every candid enquirer, he began to translate the Scriptures into English; a work for which he merits the blessings of his country, and of mankind, as long as the world shall exist.

In 1378, the reformer was again called upon to defend himself against the charge of heresy before the archbishop of Canterbury, and other allies of the Roman church. The examination on this occasion took place at Lambeth, whither Wickliffe was followed by a numerous body of citizens and messengers from the court, who declared themselves ready to defend him against all attacks on his person or liberty. It appears, however, that the reformer was induced greatly to modify the statement of his doctrines, in reply to the questions put to him by the archbishop and his colleagues: and his conduct in this matter is, consequently, open to the weighty charge of prevarication. To what extent he sinned against his conscience, or whether he

sinned against it at all, we cannot stop to enquire ; but we have sufficient proof, that he continued firm and sound in the grand principles with which he set out. On returning to Lutterworth, where he was suffered to remain undisturbed to the end of his days, he resumed his labours with undiminished industry ; and his conduct furnishes us with an excellent instance of a zeal which, if it had led to greater heroism, might have produced less useful results. He continued to preach those doctrines, as a parish priest, for which he had contended in the world and in the presence of men who were resolved upon his ruin. Without abating his devotion to the cause of truth, he yielded to the exigencies of his situation ; and, not being able to produce a reformation at once, or by his own exertions, determined on preparing the way for others, and on sowing the seeds of knowledge, though it might be ages before they became ripe for the harvest.

The powerful support which he received from the duke of Lancaster, and his own high character for learning and piety, preserved Wickliffe from the destruction which incessantly impended over him ; but the safety which he thus enjoyed afforded no guarantee to his followers ; and as soon as the doctrine which he had promulgated found other advocates less favourably situated for professing them securely, the power and vengeance of the church burst forth against them like a torrent. Wickliffe died in 1387 ; and some time before that event a statute had been secretly passed through the house of lords, which the clergy hoped would prove a sufficient antidote to the danger with which his principles threatened them. By this act it was declared, that all who preached without licence against the catholic faith, or against the laws of the land, should be arrested and kept in prison till they justified themselves according to the law and reason of holy church ; that their commitment was to take place on a writ to that effect being issued by the chancellor, who was to send commissions to the sheriffs and other the

king's ministers, after the bishops had returned the names of the delinquents into the court of chancery. The house of commons protested against the passing of this act without their consent, as wholly illegal, and it was in consequence repealed; but the power of the clergy at that period was so far superior to that of the public, that the enactment was suffered to remain on the statute books, though illegal in its origin, and repealed by a legal decree.

On the accession of Henry IV., the clergy found themselves in a situation to fix their authority against schismatics on a firmer basis. The new monarch, eager to secure so powerful an auxiliary as the church in establishing his throne, willingly purchased its favour, by passing an act in the second year of his reign, which no longer left it doubtful whether the followers of Wickliffe were amenable or not to the punishments of the law. According to this act, if any persons were suspected of heresy, the ordinary had a right to detain them in prison till they were canonically purged, or did abjure their errors; provided always that the proceedings against them were publicly and judicially ended within three months. If they were convicted, the diocesan or his commissary might imprison and fine them at discretion. Those who refused to abjure their errors, or, after abjuration, relapsed, were to be delivered over to the secular power; and the mayors, sheriffs, or bailiffs, were to be present, if required, when the bishop or his commissary passed sentence; and, after sentence, they were to receive them, and, in some high place, burn them to death before the people.

By the time this act was passed, the Lollards — a common term of reproach applied to the professors of the new doctrines, — had considerably increased; and the clergy therefore proceeded, without delay, to exercise the authority which Henry had put into their hands. The first victim of their rage, and the first Christian that suffered death for the purifying of his faith, in England, was William Sautre, rector of Saint Osithes, in London.

Before he obtained this living, he was minister of Saint Margaret's, at Lynn in Norfolk, and, while there, had incurred the suspicion of his bishop for heretical opinions. Not being, however, sufficiently confirmed at that period in the love of truth, or wanting the fortitude to suffer as his principles dictated, he obtained the pardon of his diocesan, by a formal recantation of his supposed errors. But soon after his settlement in London, his mind became violently agitated with remorse at the recollection of his weakness; and feeling it impossible to obtain any peace of conscience till he atoned for his want of firmness and sincerity, he petitioned parliament for permission to address it publicly on the subject of his faith. The only answer he received to this petition was an order to appear before archbishop Arundel; who accused him in the convocation of saying that he would not worship the cross on which Christ suffered, but only Christ himself; that if any man had vowed to make a distant pilgrimage, he had better give away the money such a journey would cost him in alms; that the obligation of the clergy to preach the word of God was greater than that of their saying the canonical hours; and lastly, that the sacramental bread was still bread after it had been consecrated. Having asked for six days to deliberate on his answer to this accusation, he sent in a declaration, at the end of that period, of his entire assent to the truth of the doctrines which he was accused of holding; and, after an examination which seems to have been little needed, he was condemned to be degraded and burnt, with all the formalities in which his barbarous persecutors, according to the spirit of the times, delighted to indulge.

The execution of Sautre appeased, for a time, the thirst for blood which began to be felt among the ecclesiastical rulers of the kingdom. Nine years were suffered to elapse before the Lollards were again visited with capital punishment: they were not, however, left free in the interim from various kinds of oppression;

and it is suspected, with great appearance of truth, that some of the most conspicuous among them were condemned to linger out their existence in prison. Thomas Badly, for whom the pile of martyrdom was re-lit, was an obscure individual, and could only have attracted attention when the spirit of intolerance was become so violent, that no victim was sufficiently mean to escape its observation. This poor man, a tailor by trade, was consecutively examined by bishops and archbishops, by the duke of York, and the chief of the nobility, on the subject of his faith; and to all their questions he returned answers so calm and sensible, that they would have effectually protected him from violence, had the judges not been previously determined on his destruction.

The presence of mind which Badly evinced at his trial was not greater than the admirable fortitude which supported him at his execution. The first dreadful feeling of agony which shot through his frame, as the fire rose around him, extorted from his lips a cry for mercy. This exclamation the prince of Wales, who was a witness of the execution, interpreted into a petition for pardon; and, with the ready but transient humanity which formed part of his character, he instantly ordered the flames to be extinguished, and the sufferer lifted from the barrel in which he had been placed. He then told him, that if he was ready to recant, he should not only be pardoned, but provided for by a pension for life. But no persuasion could induce the martyr to accept these proposals; and the pile having been again set in order, he cheerfully resigned himself to death.

About three years after this event, and upon the accession of Henry V. to the throne, the attention of the government, as well as the church, was directed more seriously than ever to the suppression of the Lollards. The acknowledged head of the party at this period was the celebrated and victorious sir John Oldcastle, or, according to the title which he enjoyed in right of his wife, lord Cobham. As both the rank and talents of

this nobleman, and the reputation he possessed at court, gave immense weight to his example and influence, he was regarded by Arundel and the rest of the clergy as the most dangerous of their enemies, and no means were left unemployed to effect his destruction. Henry, who, like his father, was fully convinced of the importance of conciliating the church, earnestly desired, if possible, to pursue measures which might enable him to retain the favour of his clergy, and at the same time avoid encouraging that disposition to sanguinary intolerance, which was but too rapidly gaining ground. But he was ill fitted to oppose the artful policy of the priesthood; and, urged into persecution, he soon consented to make enactments which loaded the consciences of men with even heavier chains than they had borne under his predecessors. According to one of these, it was declared, that, whoever they were that should read the Scriptures in the mother tongue, they should forfeit land, cattle, life, and goods from their heirs for ever, and be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the crown, and most errant traitors to the land.

Henry at first resisted the arguments which were made use of to induce him to resign lord Cobham to the fate of a common heretic. At length, however, his enemies found an opportunity for enforcing their persuasions with better success. At the burning of some books near Saint Paul's Cross, one of the number was discovered to have been his property; and it was immediately taken, and parts of it read, to the king. Henry is said to have expressed the greatest horror at the opinions contained in the extracts laid before him, and immediately asked lord Cobham whether he did not think that the book had been properly condemned. His lordship answered that it had, but that he had not read more than two or three pages of it: from which we may gather that the volume, which he had sent to a limner in Paternoster Row to be ornamented, and in whose shop it had been seized, was one which he had purchased, rather on account of its general conformity to

his own opinions, than from a particular acquaintance with its contents. Fearing, however, as it would seem, lest the answer he had given respecting the book should be interpreted into a renunciation of his principles, he replied to Henry's exhortations, to submit himself to the church, in these plain and energetic words:—"You, most worthy prince, I am always prompt and ready to obey: unto you, next my eternal God, owe I my whole obedience, and submit thereto, as I have ever done, all that I have either of fortune or nature, ready at all times to fulfil whatsoever ye shall in the Lord command me. But, as touching the pope and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service, for so much as I know him by the Scriptures to be the great antichrist, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place." A more effectual aid could not have been given to the adversaries of the unfortunate nobleman than that afforded them by this speech. The king, enraged at the freedom and resolution which characterised it, no longer attempted to shelter him from the storm with which he was threatened; and, turning from him with an expression of great anger on his countenance, he gave the archbishop authority to commence proceedings against him without delay.

A summary execution, however, of the law was not in this case so easy as in that of inferior persons. Lord Cobham was allowed to make good his retreat to the castle of Cowling in Kent; and, as that mansion was well fortified, and his tenantry numerous and affectionately devoted to his service, he felt himself secure for some time against the measures of his enemies. The messenger who carried the citation which was first sent him from the archbishop applied in vain for admission into the castle; and when he returned, accompanied by one of the king's officers, and delivered his summons, the only answer he received from lord Cobham was, that he despised the devilish practices of the priests, and would never yield to their proceedings. The next step

taken by Arundel was to summon him by letters fixed on the gate of Rochester cathedral; but these were treated with the same contempt as the former citations, and were torn down as often as they were replaced. As this was an insult which the archbishop felt he must either resent, or suffer a considerable diminution of his authority, he no longer restrained himself within the measures which he had at first thought it prudent to adopt; he therefore passed a sentence of excommunication against lord Cobham, terming him a heretic and a disturber of the public peace, and called upon the civil magistrate to assist in bringing him to justice.

His lordship appears to have fully understood the nature of his situation, and to have been well aware how long he might with any degree of safety resist the threats of his enemy. So long as he was free from the dangers attending excommunication, there was a hope that his former favour with the king might save him from public violence; while the strength of his castle was a sufficient protection against any secret efforts to injure his person. But his situation was now widely different. It was evident that Henry no longer regarded him as deserving his protection; and the extreme censures of the church not only exposed him to the arm of the civil magistrate, but, according to the opinions of the age, would justify any of the persons around him in betraying him to his enemies. Under these circumstances, he considered that the more prudent as well as more magnanimous conduct would be, to trust himself at once to the goodness of his cause, and repel the attacks of his enemies as he best might.

Having, with this view, drawn up a confession of his faith, which he entitled "The Christian Belief of the Lord Cobham," he went and delivered it to the king, respectfully desiring his majesty to examine it and have it submitted to the scrutiny of pious and learned men. But this request was not listened to, and the loyal and virtuous nobleman had the sorrow to see the king turn

austerely from him, and 'commit his confession to the enraged and prejudiced archbishop.

It was probably from a feeling that his truth and loyalty lay under suspicion from this conduct of the king, that induced lord Cobham, at this period of the business, to appeal to the law of arms for the decision of his quarrel with the church. However imperfect the ideas of men might be in the fifteenth century on points of doctrine or discipline, it is next to impossible to imagine that either lord Cobham, or any one else, could think of deciding a religious, or, in fact, any controversy, in which argument only could be employed, by strength or skill of arm. The only plausible explanation that can be given of his offering to prove his freedom from heresy, first, by the oath of a hundred knights and squires, who would be answerable for him ; and next, by fighting, in the quarrel of his faith, with any man living, the king and the lords of his council alone excepted, is, that the odious accusation of heresy implied a union of the basest vices as well as of the worst errors of which a man could be esteemed guilty. Like all other terms of a similar nature, it was sufficiently indefinite, in the popular acceptation, to admit within its meaning any idea which could render the person to whom it was applied most guilty in the opinion of him who used it. When a man, therefore, of refined and chivalrous feelings, like lord Cobham, found himself accused of heresy, he would be anxious, not merely to defend himself against the dangers to which it exposed him, but from the stain which it left upon his character in the eyes of the world ; his perfect consciousness of rectitude, in a religious point of view, and his resolution not to swerve from a confession of the truth, being wholly distinct from the feelings with which he would look upon himself as one suspected of disloyalty and want of duty to his country. To prove the truth of his opinions by argument, or to suffer for them, if necessary, would not be to clear himself of the stain on his knightly character. However superior he might be to the generality of his

contemporaries in point of religious knowledge, his rank in society, and the customs in which he had been brought up, kept him still in subjection to all the prejudices of the age ; and, though prepared to become a martyr, he could not forget what was due to his hitherto unspotted reputation as a loyal knight.

Both the challenge, however, and the 'appeal, which he next made, from all inferior judges to the pope himself, were treated with contempt, and an order was made out for his committal to the Tower. While in prison he diligently prepared materials for defending the principles which exposed him to so much trouble ; and at his appearance before the archbishop, in the chapter-house of St. Paul's cathedral, he answered the offer which was made to him of pardon, on condition of his recanting, by taking a paper from his bosom which contained the profession of his belief, and which he requested permission to read to the consistory—which consisted of Arundel, the bishops of London and Winchester, and the lieutenant of the Tower. This being granted, he was desired to stand aside after reading the confession ; and a consultation took place between Arundel and the other persons present, respecting the tenour of his opinions. At length the archbishop said, " Come hither, sir John. In this your writing are many good things contained, and right catholic also ; we deny it not. But there are other points, concerning those articles, whereof no mention is made in this your bill ; and, therefore, ye must declare your mind yet more plainly." On his endeavouring to draw something from him on those points which he had not sufficiently explained for the purpose of his enemies, lord Cobham declared his resolution to give no other answer than that which was to be found in his written confession. To this Arundel replied, " Sir John, beware what you do ; for if you answer not clearly to these things, especially at the time appointed you only for that purpose, the law of holy church is, that, compelled once by a judge, we openly proclaim you a heretic."—" Do as ye think best, for I

am at a point!" was the only answer which his lordship deigned to return to this threat.

This examination took place on a Saturday; and on remanding him to the following Monday, Arundel informed him that he would send him a clear exposition of the points, in writing, to which he required his answers. This was accordingly done, and at the time specified, the accused was brought to the Dominican convent within Ludgate, where the examination was renewed before a promiscuous assembly of monks, friars, and others; who, losing all sense of decorum, as well as charity, showed their hatred of the heretic by a variety of loud and vulgar vituperations. Lord Cobham still felt as a man, and the undeserved insults thus heaped upon him inspired him with a still deeper indignation against the injustice of his persecutors. When Arundel, therefore, reminded him that he had been informed on the preceding Saturday that he stood accursed for contumacy and disobedience to the holy church, and that as for himself, he had expected that he would have before then sought absolution, but that it was even then not too late, if it were done as the church ordained, his lordship replied in an earnest and fervent tone, "Nay, forsooth will I not; for I never yet trespassed against you, and, therefore, I do not want your absolution." Then kneeling down on the pavement, and raising his hands towards heaven, he continued to exclaim, "I shrive me here unto Thee, my eternal living God, that in my youth I offended Thee, O Lord, most grievously in pride, wrath, and gluttony; in covetousness and licentiousness. Many men have I hurt in mine anger, and done many other horrible sins! Good Lord, I ask Thee mercy!" As he made this devout confession, his eyes streamed with tears; but, rising, he exclaimed with a loud voice, "Lo! these are your guides, good people: lo! for the breaking of God's law and his commandments they never yet cursed me; but for their own laws and traditions most cruelly do they treat me and other men. And, therefore, both they and their

laws, by the promise of God, shall utterly be destroyed."

The just passion and noble conviction of the truth which inspired Lord Cobham, as he thus spoke, compelled the court to silence, however unwillingly. For a time, even the haughtiest and fiercest of his enemies appeared abashed by his energy, and he seemed to stand before the tribunal without any man either to judge or accuse him. Arundel at length broke the silence which reigned in the assembly, and the examination was continued. The questions with which he was pressed with the greatest pertinacity respected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and he was desired to say, whether he believed that, after the words of consecration, there remained any material bread. To this he replied, "The Scriptures make no mention of this word material, and, therefore, my faith hath nothing to do therewith; but this I say, and believe, that it is Christ's body and bread." This answer roused the whole court, and "Heresy! heresy!" was shouted from one corner of it to the other. One of the bishops, not thinking this sufficient, remarked that it was a heresy manifest to say that it is bread after the sacramental words are spoken. Lord Cobham, however, had argument wherewith to answer assertion, and he replied, "Saint Paul was, I am sure, as wise as you, and more godly learned; and he called it bread:—'The bread that we break,' saith he, 'is it not the partaking of the body of Christ?'" To the archbishop's observation that he had sent him a paper containing the opinions of the church, and its most learned doctors, on the subject, he answered, "I know none holier than Christ and his apostles; and as for that determination, it is none of theirs; for it standeth not with the Scriptures, but manifestly against them. If it be the church's, it hath been hers only since she received the great poison of worldly possessions." The prior of the Carmelites now began a dispute with the prisoner, which, notwithstanding his dignity and the advantage he possessed over his opponent, he was ill able to

sustain. "Rash judgment and right judgment," observed the prior, "are all one with you; so swift judges always are the learned scholars of Wickliffe."—"It is well sophistered of you forsooth," returned his lordship. "Preposterous are your judgments evermore; for, as the prophet Esay saith, 'Ye judge evil good, and good evil;' and, therefore, the same prophet concludeth that, 'Your ways are not God's ways, nor God's ways your ways.' And as for that virtuous man Wickliffe, I shall say here, before both God and man, that before I knew that despised doctrine of his, I never abstained from sin; but since I learned therein to fear my Lord God, it hath otherwise, I trust, been with me. So much grace could I never find in all your glorious instructions."—"It were not well with me," retorted the prior, "if I had no grace to amend my life, till I heard the devil preach. Saint Hierom saith, 'That he which seeketh such suspected masters shall not find the mid-day light, but the mid-day devil.'"—"Your fathers, the old Pharisees," was the immediate reply, "ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrines to the devil; and you, as their natural children, have still the self-same judgment concerning his faithful followers. To judge you as you be, we need no farther go than to your own proper acts. Where do you find, in all God's law, that ye should thus sit in judgment of any Christian man, or yet give sentence upon any other man to death, as ye do here daily? No ground have ye in all the Scriptures so hardly to take it upon you but in Annas and Caiaphas, which sate thus upon Christ, and upon his apostles after his ascension."—"Yes, sir," observed one of the lawyers present, "and Christ too, for he judged Judas."—"I never heard that he did," replied lord Cobham: "Judas judged himself, and thereupon went out and hanged himself. Indeed, Christ pronounced a woe against him for that covetous act of his, as he doth yet with many of you; for since his venom was shed into the church, ye never followed Christ." On the archbishop desiring him to explain

what he meant by the venom of which he spoke, he replied, "Your possessions and lordships; for then cried an angel in the air, as your own chronicles mention, 'Woe, woe, woe! this day is venom shed into the church of God.' Since that time one pope hath put down another, one hath poisoned another, one hath cursed another, and one hath slain another, and done much more mischief, as all the chronicles tell. Let all men consider this well, that Christ was meek and merciful; the pope is proud, and a tyrant: Christ was poor, and forgave; the pope is rich, and a malicious manslayer, as his daily acts do prove him. Rome is the very nest of Antichrist, and out of that nest cometh all the disciples of him, of whom prelates, priests, and monks are the body, and these piled friars are the tail!" — "Alas! sir," observed the prior of the Augustines, "why do you say so? That is uncharitably spoken." His lordship answered, "Not only is it my saying, but also the prophet Esay's long before my time." The dispute which was thus carried on between lord Cobham and his judges made the court appear more like a school for public disputation than a judgment hall,—a remarkable circumstance, not at all unfrequent in the subsequent persecutions of the reformation. Arundel, however, aware that the trial made no progress, while the prisoner was freely allowed to confront his accusers, cut short the dispute by thus addressing him:—"Sir John, ye have spoken here many wonderful words to the slanderous rebuke of the whole spirituality, giving a great evil example unto the common sort. We must now be at this short point with you. Ye must submit yourself, and have none other opinion in these matters, than the universal faith and belief of the holy church of Rome, or else throw yourself, no remedy, into most deep danger. See to it in time, for anon it will be too late!"—"I will none otherwise believe in these points than that I have told you here afore; do with me what ye will."—"Well, then," replied the archbishop, "I see none other, but we must needs do the law." Then

rising from his seat, all the persons present at the same time vailing their bonnets, he proceeded with increased solemnity—"In the name of God! Lord Cobham having been detected and presented at the lawful denouncement and request of our universal clergy, we proceeded against him according to the law, God to witness! with all the favour possible; and following Christ's example in all we might, which willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, we sought all ways to bring him to the church's unity; and though we found him in the Catholic faith far wide, and so stiff-necked that he would not confess his error, nor purge himself, nor yet repent him thereof, we yet pitying him of fatherly compassion, appointed him a competent time of deliberation, to see if he would seek to be reformed; but seeing that he is incorrigible, we are driven to the very extremity of the law, and with great heaviness of heart we now proceed to the publication of the sentence definitive against him." This sentence did not merely condemn the pious and heroic nobleman to death, but was expressed in the most virulent and unfeeling terms. It had, however, no other effect on the intended victim than to confirm his resolution in the good cause he had undertaken to defend; and when Arundel had concluded, he replied:—"Though ye judge my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet am I certain and sure that ye can do no harm to my soul, no more than could Satan upon the soul of Job. He who created it will of his infinite mercy and promise save it, I have therein no manner of doubt. And as concerning these articles before rehearsed, I will stand to them even to the very death, by the grace of my eternal God!" Then turning to the court, he extended his hands, and said in a louder tone of voice, "Good Christian people, for God's love be well aware of these men! for they will else beguile you, and lead you blindling into hell with themselves; for Christ saith plainly unto you, 'If one blind man leadeth another, they are like both to fall into the ditch.'" Having spoken in this manner he knelt

down, and exclaimed, " Lord God eternal ! I beseech Thee, of thy great mercy's sake, to forgive my pursuers, if it be thy blessed will ! " *

Soon after being remanded to the Tower, lord Cobham received information that a respite had been granted him for fifty days, at the desire of the archbishop. This show of mercy, however, deserved few thanks ; for it appears to have been contrived as a pretence for degrading him in the opinion of his fellow reformers, as an abjuration, bearing his name, was in the mean time sent forth ; and it was only by the exertions of those who were acquainted with his unshaken firmness, that this scandalous document was refuted. To the same friends he was shortly after indebted for a still stronger proof of attachment, their zeal in his service prompting them to take measures for securing his escape from prison, and which they had the happiness to see crowned with success.

It is not known what steps lord Cobham took, after his escape, to further the objects of his party ; but his reputation, and the increase which had taken place of late in the number of the Lollards, were sufficient causes to make Henry give credit to the arguments which his clergy employed to augment his hatred of the schismatics. Having received intelligence that they had determined upon attempting to surprise the city, and that for that purpose large parties of them had begun to assemble in the fields about Saint Giles's, he set out in the middle of the night of the 6th of January, to surprise the supposed army of rebels. On coming, however, to the place, he found only a few persons, who were speedily dispersed at the appearance of his armed attendants, twenty of them falling beneath their too ready swords, and sixty being taken prisoners.

This strange affair gave the enemies of lord Cobham an opportunity for alleging that he added to the guilt of heresy that of high treason ; some of the persons

* Fuller's Church Hist. Fox : and on the other side, Walsingham, Hist. Ang. p. 426.

whom the king had surprised having said, it is reported, that they were waiting for lord Cobham. It also furnished the most virulent of the persecutors with new reasons for shedding the blood of their victims; and no less than thirty-nine persons, among whom was sir Roger Acton, a man of great worth and respectability, were burnt alive, with every mark of contempt and contrivance to render their sufferings the more acute. But while these things were being transacted, lord Cobham himself had found a safe retreat in Wales, where he remained concealed for four years, when he was unhappily discovered by lord Powis, and apprehended, but not till he had so bravely defended himself, that his pursuers began to faint in their attempt, and at last only owed their success to a woman's ferociously breaking his legs with a stool. Thus disabled, he was at length overpowered, and, being secured, was immediately conveyed to London, where he was put to death by being hung in chains, and burnt. The execution of lord Cobham was followed by that of numerous other Lollards; and the new archbishop, Chicheley, seemed inspired by even a worse spirit than his predecessor Arundel. Terror prevailed in every part of the country where there had appeared any symptoms of attachment to the new doctrines; and imprisonment, exile, or death, was the immediate consequence of any expression which could be converted into an acknowledgment that Wickliffe was not a blasphemer. The accession of the young king, Henry VI., enabled the persecutors to continue their operations with unrestrained atrocity; and so intent were they in searching out their victims, that a priest named William Taylor was burnt for asserting that the prayers which are offered to heaven for any supernatural gift must be addressed to the Deity alone.

CHAP. XXII.

GREGORY XII. — COUNCIL OF PISA. — COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE. —
JOHN HUSS. — JEROME OF PRAGUE. — THE HUSSITES. — RO-
MAN PONTIFFS. — CONCLUSION.

THE schism which had produced such fatal effects in the Roman church during the preceding century, was continued with not less fatal virulence in this. For two years, Benedict XIII. was closely besieged and kept a prisoner in the city of Avignon. He at length effected his escape, and some weak endeavours were made on both sides to stop the progress of the disorders which now began to shake the church to its very foundations. Benedict sent his ambassadors to Boniface, who ruled in Italy; but as they refused to acknowledge him as pope, he rejected their advances, and the strife was renewed with fresh violence. At this juncture, Boniface was removed by death, and the cardinals, who hoped, by what was termed the method of session, to heal the schism, proceeded immediately to the election of a new pontiff. The choice fell upon the cardinal archbishop of Ravenna, who assumed the title of Innocent VII. It had been the very object of the sacred college, by thus electing another rival pope, to render the ejection of Benedict less difficult and violent. But the new pontiff, though he had promised to descend the chair as the price of Benedict's resignation, now resolutely determined not to resign his newly acquired dignity. A struggle the most ruinous and afflicting followed; but the sudden death of Innocent again gave the prospect of peace; and each of the cardinals, in proceeding to a new election, took a solemn oath that he would resign the pontificate, should the votes be in his favour, the instant that Benedict, on his part, should consent to do the same. The cardinal of St. Mark was the member of the college on whom the choice fell and he assumed the name of

Gregory XII., repeating in the most solemn manner the promises which he had made previous to his election. Benedict replied to these promises with assurances expressed in the same earnest language; but so little was there of truth in the declarations of either the one or the other, that Benedict excommunicated all who had espoused the principles of neutrality in France; while Gregory, completely under the influence of his relatives, found himself in neither the state nor disposition to obey the injunctions of the mediating princes. In a short time he made himself so odious to his cardinals, that they resolved in a body to forsake him, and they took the remarkable expedient of appealing, "first from the pope ill informed, to the pope well informed; secondly, from the pope to Jesus Christ, of whom he was the vicar; thirdly, to an œcumenical council which had a right to judge the sovereign pontiff; and, lastly, to the future pope, who would redress that which his predecessor had injuriously ordained."* So evident was the injury inflicted on the church by these occurrences, that the cardinals who had taken the opposite sides at length agreed to hold an assembly, to consult in common on measures for the restoration of peace. They decided on calling a council at Pisa in the spring of the following year. A synod in the mean while was held at Paris for the same purpose, and the whole Christian world seemed to have arisen in its strength to dethrone the present unworthy possessors of the apostolic chair.

At the period appointed, the great dignitaries of the church repaired to Pisa; and Christendom once more beheld an assembly, worthy, it appeared, by the number and gravity of its members, to be trusted with the conduct of its affairs. The patriarchs of the great Eastern churches; twelve archbishops; eighty bishops, with the numerous representatives of the absent prelates; eighty-seven abbots, including those of all the most celebrated monasteries in the world; the chiefs of the numerous military orders which had arisen during the

A. D.
1409.

* Fleury, *L'Hist. Ecclés.* liv. 101. n. 86.

period of the crusades ; and the most distinguished theologians and canonists from the various countries in which learning chiefly abounded. The business of the meeting was opened with solemn prayer ; and the anthems which pealed through the aisles of the cathedral, as the august members of the synod prepared themselves for the important work they had in hand, seemed to fill all hearts with awe, and to raise the mind far beyond the reach of aught earthly or sensual.

It was in the fifth session of the council that the main object of the meeting was brought forward and discussed. In this, and those which immediately followed, thirty-seven articles were drawn up against the two popes ; allegiance was withdrawn from both ; and the archbishop of Pisa summed up the whole, by proclaiming in a loud voice, that the council which represented the universal church, and had consequently authority to judge and decide on the questions discussed, had determined that the pretenders to papal authority, whom the church had too long acknowledged, were notorious schismatics, heretics, and blasphemers, and a scandal to all Christendom by their obstinacy ; that they were, therefore, deprived of all dignity, and separated from the church ; and that no Christian might in future honour them on pain of excommunication. This important object of the assembly having been obtained, the cardinals who were present in Pisa proceeded to the election of a pope ; and, after ten days' close deliberation, their choice fell on Peter of Candia, a man of excellent character and ability, and who had reached this high eminence in the church from the low condition of a poor, fatherless, beggar boy.

A. D.

1414.

The new pontiff assumed the title of Alexander V., and, with some few exceptions, was universally acknowledged as the only legitimate head of the church. But one of the first acts of his reign embroiled him with the clergy. Anxious to advance the influence of the Franciscan order, to which he had belonged, he issued a bull which enabled its members to administer

the sacraments in parishes without the consent of their respective pastors. The king and the university firmly resisted this dangerous innovation ; and John XXIII., who succeeded to the throne shortly after its introduction, hesitated not to annul all the privileges which had been granted by his predecessor to the obnoxious mendicants. It was speedily discovered, however, that he had no claim either to gratitude or respect for this measure. He was haughty and avaricious, resolved on the attainment of power at the sacrifice of every thing beside, and prepared to espouse any principle or party which might tend to advance his interests. He entered Rome in triumph, was recognised as sovereign and universal pontiff ; and had he acted with prudence, the Christian world might have recovered its tranquillity, and religion its proper influence on men's hearts. But his vices made him hated by his people ; and his bad policy humbled him before his chief enemy, Ladislaus, king of Naples. That prince entered Rome in the month of June, 1413 ; and the fury with which his troops ravaged every quarter of the venerable city, reduced it to the lowest state of affliction and desolation it had ever yet experienced. In this calamitous condition, the pontiff, who fled for safety to Bologna, appealed for help to the emperor Sigismond ; and that monarch was induced, at the entreaties of a vast portion of the church, to agree to the holding of a council in the city of Constance.* This was far from meeting the wishes of the pontiff, who trembled at the idea of being obliged to attend the assembly in a place not devoted to his interests. But it was now impossible for him to retreat ; and, at the instance of Sigismond, he issued the necessary bull for the convocation of the rulers of the church at Constance in the month of November. On the 5th of that month, John, accompanied by a numerous body of cardinals and bishops, opened the assembly, with all the pomp which the occasion seemed to demand, in the cathedral of the city. It was not,

* Dupin. Fleury.

however, till the following month that the emperor, the various princes of Germany, the ambassadors from England and France, arrived, and took their seats with the clergy. Above 100,000 persons, it is said, were now assembled at Constance; and the whole Christian world awaited with anxiety the decisions of the council. In the month of February, deputies arrived from both the deposed popes; and the emperor and his colleagues then began the important consideration of the charges which were brought in great number against John himself. The conclusion to which they came was, that he must either be at once deposed, or desired to abdicate the throne by a conjoint act with his predecessors. After some resistance and prevarication, John openly declared his willingness to resign, if his resignation could restore peace to the church, and this declaration he confirmed with a solemn oath. The members of the council expressed themselves satisfied with this assurance, and were loud in their praise of the pontiff's noble sacrifice of himself to the necessities of the times: but they did not cease to discuss the question of his guilt: and it having been proposed to proceed immediately to the election of a new pope, John formed the determination of securing his safety by flight. This measure, notwithstanding the watchfulness of the emperor, he succeeded in accomplishing; and the council had to pursue a long and difficult series of deliberations, before it could determine on the proceedings which it would now be lawful, or expedient, for it to pursue.*

One of the first objects which re-engaged its attention on resuming the business of the assembly, and in its seventh session, was the supposed heresy of the celebrated John Huss, the proceedings on which were, above all others, the most important to the general interests of the Christian church.

While the first dawn of reformation was struggling in England with the darkness which it was the interest of its corrupt clergy to perpetuate, truth had

* Fleury. Dupin.

begun the same struggle in Bohemia, and was subjected to the same opposition. The works of Wickliffe had already for some time past been circulated through that country, having been carried thither by some of the followers of queen Anne, the wife of Richard II., and sister of Wenceslaus king of Bohemia, a princess of the most amiable character, and earnestly attached to the reformed opinions. It is probable, however, that the productions of the English reformer would have long remained unnoticed, had it not been for their providentially attracting the attention of the celebrated John Huss, a man of great learning and eloquence, and confessor to the consort of Wenceslaus. Before making himself thoroughly acquainted with the nature of Wickliffe's sentiments, he regarded his works with the prejudice common to his age and order: but on examining them more narrowly, his aversion gradually gave way to respect; and as he continued to study them, he became every day more firmly convinced that they were worthy of the most profound respect.*

The change produced in his opinions by this study of Wickliffe's writings was speedily apparent in his preaching; and in the various struggles in which he was engaged in the University of Prague, and with his fellow ministers, he never ceased to insist on the necessity of a reformation, both of doctrine and discipline, and on the general excellence of the English reformer's principles. For some years he continued to publish these opinions without incurring any material danger; but in 1410, the writings of Wickliffe were condemned to the flames, by the archbishop of Prague; and about the same time a sentence of excommunication was passed against Huss at Rome. Notwithstanding this, he continued to preach as before, nor did he cease to propagate the truth from his pulpit, till, prohibited from any further exercise of his ministry, he was summoned to appear before the council assembled at Constance.

* *Historia et Monumenta Johan. Hus. et Hieronymi Pragensis.* Nuremberg, 1775. vol. i. p. 16.

Huss readily obeyed the mandate which summoned him to this assembly, and he was accompanied thither by John de Chlum, a nobleman of high rank and considerable influence, who had long admired the virtues of the reformer, and remained to the last his unshaken friend. On the day after his arrival, he informed the pope of his presence, and received a promise of protection against injustice.* Instead, however, of being permitted, as he appears to have expected would be the case, to expound his sentiments publicly from the pulpit, he was at once accused of heresy by Paletz, a professor of divinity in the University of Prague, and Causis, one of the parochial clergy of that city. Almost immediately after this he was ordered to appear before the pope†; and proceeding to the pontifical palace in obedience to this summons, was thrown into close confinement, from which neither the remonstrances of his friend John de Chlum, nor his own appeal to the justice of his accusers, availed to liberate him. His first place of confinement was the chantry-house of the church, where he was kept eight days, at the end of which time he was removed to the prison pertaining to the convent of preaching friars. There the closeness of his restraint, and the labour and anxiety he had lately undergone, united to throw him into a dangerous illness. The exertions of his friends in the mean time met with no better success than their first application for his release. The emperor Sigismond, who had granted him a safe-conduct, replied to their remonstrances by sending orders to his ambassadors to procure his immediate liberation, and to set him free by force if they could do it by no other means. But mea-

* The words of the pope were, "Etiam si Johannes Hus fratrem sibi germanum occidisset, tamen se nullo modo commissurum, quantum in ipso esset, ut aliqua ei fieret injuria, quam diu Constantiæ esset."—*Hist. et Monumenta*, vol. i. p. 5.

† To the messengers who conveyed the commands of the pontiff, Huss observed, "I have not come hither to defend myself apart, before the pope and the cardinals, which I have never wished to do, but in the universal congregation of the synod, where I will defend myself, as God shall help me, and answer without doubt or concealment whatever I am asked. But notwithstanding I do not refuse, whenever it is required, to appear before the cardinals. And though I be evil entreated of them, I shall continue to trust in the Lord Jesus, that I shall rather die for his glory than deny the truth which I have derived from the sacred Scriptures."—*Ib.*

tures were effectually taken by his enemies to counteract these orders, and Sigismund was shortly after persuaded to sacrifice every principle of manly honour to the fear of offending the church.

To carry on the prosecution of Huss with proper formality, the patriarch of Constantinople and two bishops were nominated as commissioners to enquire into his heresy, and examine witnesses on the subject. It was while these persons were busily engaged in the business, that the council itself had come to the determination of deposing the rival popes ; and John XXIII., who had opened it as the supreme head of the church, was in consequence obliged to flee precipitately from Constance, and take refuge in Schaffhausen. This circumstance rendered it necessary to transfer Huss to the care of a new keeper ; and the bishop of Constance was charged with the office of guarding against his escape. This, it appears, he did with unnecessary severity, in the fortress of Gottleben ; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that the deposed pope was himself, in a short time, brought to the same prison.

In the month of April, 1415, the cardinals of Cambridge and Saint Mark, together with the bishop of Dol and the abbot of Cisteaux, were directed to complete the process against Huss, and at the same time draw up a formal condemnation of the doctrines of Wickliffe. This had already been done more than once ; and certainly, if few things can exceed the wickedness of punishing men for their opinions, nothing can possibly exceed the folly of attempts to disprove doctrines by this authoritative mode of judging them. The sentiments of Wickliffe, however, were exhibited under a certain number of propositions, and then formally condemned. After this ceremony had been gone through, the council found itself at liberty, and perhaps thought itself in a more favourable condition, to prosecute its intentions with regard to Huss. He was, therefore, brought from Gottleben, and placed (heavily chained) in the Franciscan monastery. On the 5th of June he was called

before the assembly, in order to be examined ; but he had no sooner begun to read the propositions contained in his works, than the court was thrown into confusion by the clamorous exclamations of the more bigoted of its members, and the enquiry was consequently postponed till the 7th of the month.

At the renewal of the examination, which was carried on in the presence of the emperor, Huss was accused of having testified his approbation of Wickliffe's doctrine respecting the sacrament ; but this he denied having done* : he, however, acknowledged that he considered the archbishop of Prague had acted erroneously in condemning the reformer's works without bringing any argument from Scripture to prove that what they contained was erroneous, and that he had indeed said what he was accused of saying, that is, that he wished his soul were in the same place as Wickliffe's. The examination, which was continued for some time, ended with his being sent back to his dungeon loaded with chains as before. The next day he was again brought before his judges, and the trial was recommenced by the reading of thirty-nine propositions, said to have been drawn from his writings. On each of these he was allowed to make what observations he chose ; and when pressed by the emperor and several of the prelates to recant, he requested another audience, when, if he could not prove his opinions to be founded on truth and right reason, he promised to submit himself to the judgment of the church. He was, therefore, again sent to his dungeon, and the following day, a paper containing a form of recantation was presented to him, with a request that he would sign it. But neither persuasion, nor the prospect of the dangers which threatened him, could induce him to unsay aught that he had uttered ; and he constantly declared, that he would retract nothing, unless it could be proved false by the authority of Scripture.

Having at length exhausted all their arts in the vain attempt to draw Huss into a denial of his principles

* See Hist. et Monumenta.

the council next ordered his books to be publicly burnt, and soon after sent another deputation to discover if this had had any effect on his resolution, and once more to urge upon him the policy of recanting. But this effort was as fruitless as those before made: he answered the questions put to him by presenting a paper containing a declaration of his opinions in almost the same terms as those he had formerly used; and when, five days after, the emperor sent four bishops and two noblemen, to enquire if any change had taken place in his resolution, he replied, that he adhered to the declaration he had already delivered.

This was the last attempt made on the firmness of Huss. The next day he was led before the tribunal of the council, and the proceedings were commenced by a sermon from the bishop of Lodi, who chose for his text Romans vi. verse 6.—“That the body of sin might be destroyed,” which words, he, either with wilful absurdity or gross ignorance, perverted into an apology for the burning of those who disbelieved the doctrines professed by himself and his church. When this discourse was finished, the proctor demanded that the process against the prisoner should be brought to a close. The heads of Wickliffe’s doctrines were then again read and condemned; after which the same formalities were gone through with those of Huss. He earnestly requested permission to explain or defend the several propositions separately as they were read, but this was denied him; and finding that any appeal to justice upon earth was useless, he called upon Jesus Christ as witness to his innocence. This was instantly made a cause of fresh accusation; and, lifting his hands towards Heaven, he exclaimed, “Behold, most gracious Saviour, how the council condemns as an error what thou hast prescribed and practised! for, when overborne by enemies, thou didst commit thy cause to God thy Father, leaving us this example, — that when we are oppressed we may have recourse to the judgment of God. Yes! I have maintained, and do still maintain, that an appeal made to

Jesus Christ is most just and right, because he can neither be corrupted by bribes, nor be deceived by false witnesses, nor be over-reached by any artifices. I came voluntarily to this council under the public faith of the emperor here present." As he uttered the last words, he fixed his eyes, it is said, earnestly on the emperor, who acknowledged how keenly he felt the rebuke, by blushing deeply at this allusion to his shameful perfidy or weakness.

The trial, if so his examinations may be called, being at length brought to a close, the bishop of Concordia read two sentences ; the former of which condemned his works, which were numerous and highly popular, to the flames. The latter was couched in terms which purported that the council, having the fear of God before its eyes, declared John Huss to be a manifest heretic ; that his errors had been long since condemned by the church ; that he had taught and preached many scandalous, perilous, and seditious doctrines ; that he had perverted the people of Bohemia ; that, in consequence of these errors, he deserved to be degraded from the sacerdotal and all other orders ; and that, therefore, the council directed the archbishop of Milan, and six bishops, to execute this sentence of degradation, according to the form prescribed by law ; after which degradation the church of God would no further concern itself with him, but deliver him over to the judgment of the secular power.

Every means were taken, at the punishment of a heretic, to impress the minds of those who witnessed it with an idea of his utter fall and hopeless abandonment to destruction. It has ever been a favourite maxim with the church of Rome, that men may be taught both to think and to feel aright by constant appeals to their external senses ; and this principle has taught it, not only to adorn its places of public worship with the richest productions of art, but to plan its autos da fé with as much regard to scenic effect as the pageants of a jubilee. Had it not been for this, it would, doubtless,

have despatched its opponents in a more summary manner, and John Huss would have been at once resigned to the executioner. But, instead of being contented with having secured his speedy destruction, the members of the council amused themselves, and a concourse of spectators, with a ceremony as senseless as it was unnecessary. The bishop, who had been charged with executing the sentence of degradation, first ordered him to clothe himself with his priestly garments, and take a chalice in his hand ; which having done, they exhorted him to retract his errors. The answer he gave was similar to those he had returned to persuasions of the same kind before his condemnation ; and the bishops, proceeding with the ceremony, took the chalice from him, at the same time pronouncing him accursed. They next stripped him of his priestly garments, and cut his hair in the form of a cross, to destroy all appearance of its ever having had that of a crown. When they had done this, they placed a tall paper mitre upon his head, in the shape of a pyramid, and on which three devils were painted, together with the word “ Heresiarch.” This being done, he was pronounced a layman, and was immediately delivered to the secular power to be put to death.

That which increases so greatly the absurdity of this solemn farce—sufficiently ridiculous in itself—is, the fact, that the church of Rome professes to regard the ordination of its clergy as a sacrament ; and, surely, if marriage be considered as indissoluble, because the nuptial ceremony is ranked among the sacraments, he who is once a priest must be always a priest ; and, if punished, must be punished as a priest, and not as a layman—the stripping him of his garments being surely of little avail to nullify a solemn sacrament. The ceremony, however, being completed, and the reformer placed in the hands of the magistrate, he was led, without delay, to the place of execution. In conducting him thither, the officers who had charge of his person took him past the episcopal palace, in order that he

might see the burning of his books, which had just been placed on the fire : but this made little impression on his mind ; he was well aware that the seeds of truth had already taken root in the hearts of many ; and that, even were it in the power of his enemies to consume every work which either he or any other advocate of religious freedom had produced, the cause must still prevail, and be finally successful. As he walked along, he continued to exhort the people, to assure them that he was unjustly condemned on the charge of heresy, of which he was not guilty, and to sing psalms ; calling, from time to time, on Jesus Christ, to bear testimony to his innocence, and the purity of his intentions. Even the multitude was moved at the resignation and cheerful devotion which beamed in his countenance, and characterised all the sentiments of the martyr ; and, when he knelt down on approaching the stake, and prayed aloud, with the fervent faith of a man about to die for his religion, some of the persons near him exclaimed, “ What this man has done before, we know not ; but we hear him now offer up most excellent prayers to God.”

All being ready for his execution, he expressed a wish again to address the people, but this was denied him ; and the elector palatine, to whom the emperor had committed him, ordered the officers immediately to do their duty. Huss was then placed on a scaffold prepared for the purpose, with his face turned towards the east ; and the wood being piled around him, he was once more asked if he would retract his errors. “ No,” he replied ; “ what I have written and taught, I wrote and taught to rescue souls from the power of the devil, and to deliver them from the tyranny of sin ; and I do gladly seal what I have so written and taught with my blood !” These words were no sooner uttered, than the fire was lit, and a strong wind blowing the flames in the martyr’s face, his labours and his sufferings were at once terminated. The ashes found beneath the pile after his execution were carefully collected and thrown into the Rhine,

from the fear that his followers might gather them together and preserve them as relics. But though deprived of this consolation, they could not be prevented from scraping the ground upon which he suffered, thinking it might still retain some of his precious dust ; and it is commonly asserted, that the earth which they thus collected was carried to Prague, and long preserved there as an invaluable treasure.

This tragedy was the prelude to another, equally demonstrative of that wicked and tyrannical spirit which leads men to exercise a lordship against each other, and is as abhorrent to natural reason as to natural right. Among the numerous followers of Huss was the virtuous and highly accomplished Jerome of Prague. He had studied in England, and, having there imbibed the reformed doctrines, became, on his return to Bohemia, one of the most strenuous promoters of their diffusion among his countrymen. The danger which Huss was found to be in, soon after his arrival at Constance, induced him to set out for that city himself, according to a promise he had given the martyr, that, if he heard of his being in any trouble, he would instantly repair to his assistance. On his arrival at Constance, he discovered, not only that his friend was in imminent peril, but that his own proceedings had come under the scrutiny of the council. Finding this to be the case, he quietly retreated to Uberlingen, and thence wrote to Sigismund, desiring a safe-conduct. The only answer he received was, that a safe-conduct would be given him to come, but not to return. As this was, in fact, an open declaration of the fate which awaited him, he published a protest, in which he declared his wish to justify himself from the charges against him, and again demanded a safe-conduct for that purpose. No notice being taken of this appeal, he set out on his return to Bohemia, but was arrested at Hirsaw, and conveyed to Constance in chains.

No pains were spared to persuade Jerome to recant ; and he was as often examined and remanded as Huss. In the interval of these examinations he was subjected

to the most dreadful privations ; and was at one time tied to a post, with his hands chained to his neck, for ten days ; bread and water being his only nourishment. After the death of his friend, he was pressed more earnestly than ever to retract his sentiments, the threatening aspect of the Bohemian nobles half terrifying the council from proceeding any farther in its violent measures. Whether this induced his examiners to favour him in the manner of putting their questions, or whether the natural dread of suffering was at this time too strong for his fortitude, admit of being doubted ; but, in his examination on the 23rd of September, 1415, he was persuaded publicly to anathematise the opinions of Wickliffe and Huss. In doing this, he declared, that he had discovered doctrines in the writings of the latter, which he formerly thought had been falsely ascribed to his pen ; and he swore by the Holy Trinity and the Evangelists, that he would continue in the truth of the catholic church, but that if he should ever hold any other sentiments he would submit himself to the severity of the canons, and to eternal punishment. It was naturally expected by his commissaries, the cardinals of Cambrai, Ursine, Aquilea, and Florence, that he would now be immediately set at liberty ; but, contrary to their hopes, he was remanded to prison ; and on their renewing their request that he might be liberated, they were accused of having been bribed by the Bohemians. Not willing to endure the odium of such a suspicion, they resigned their office ; and Jerome was kept in prison till the 27th of April, 1416, when he was again brought into court, and examined by new commissioners, appointed for that purpose. In order to prevent his escaping by having recourse to any prevarication in his answers, he was directed to reply to the questions put to him by a simple Yes, or No. Another method, however, was pursued in his examination three days after. He was then permitted to enter into a full declaration of his sentiments ; and, as was probably suspected, he openly declared, that he heartily repented of

his former weakness, and that he was resolved to adhere to the doctrines of Wickliffe and Huss to the last moment of his existence. At the conclusion of his address, which was of considerable length, he was led back to prison ; and, on the 30th of May, was brought before the council to receive its final judgment. As was the case when the court proceeded to condemn his martyred countryman, the business of the day was commenced with a sermon. In this discourse, which was preached by the bishop of Lodi, care was taken to prove that the errors of the prisoner and his late confederate had produced the most alarming evils in Bohemia ; and that the council had conducted the present trial with the greatest gentleness and moderation. At the conclusion of the sermon, Jerome addressed the court at some length, and with a degree of freedom which filled his judges with astonishment. When he had finished speaking, he was once more desired to recant ; but, persevering in his heresy, as it was termed, the patriarch of Constantinople read his sentence, which was thus framed :— “ Jesus Christ, our Saviour, the true vine, of which the Father is the husbandman, instructing his disciples and the rest of the faithful, said to them, ‘ If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a corrupt branch and be burned.’ The council, following the doctrine of this Sovereign Teacher, and executing his precepts, according to the design of its formation, which was to extinguish heresies, has proceeded against Jerome of Prague, master of arts, and a layman, because it is apparent, by the process instituted against him, that he has held, affirmed, and taught, certain articles, of which, some are erroneous and heretical, others blasphemous, others scandalous, others seditious ; and which were a long time past preached and taught by Wickliffe and others. The said Jerome had approved the true Catholic and apostolic faith in the same council, and had signed his abjuration and his profession of faith ; declaring at the same time his readiness to undergo any kind of punishment, if

he did any thing contrary to his present profession. But notwithstanding this, he has returned like a dog to his vomit, in order that he might vomit forth the poison which he hid in his breast in the presence of the whole council, which accorded him a public audience, and in which he has said and affirmed, that he subscribed unjustly to the sentence against Wickliffe and John Huss ; and that, in approving that judgment, he had lied and sinned against his conscience ; testifying also, that he had never seen or read any thing erroneous in the said works of Wickliffe and John Huss, which he had studied with much care and attention : whereas, it is certain that there are many errors and heresies in their books. The said Jerome has nevertheless protested, that he holds and believes the opinion of the church touching the sacrament of the altar, and the transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Jesus Christ ; and that he gives more faith to Saint Augustine, and the other doctors of the church, on this article, than to Wickliffe and John Huss. But as it is, on the other hand, certain that the said Jerome supports the errors of those two heretics, and that he is their follower and partisan, the council, for that reason, regarding him as a corrupt branch, withered and detached from the vine, declares him to be an excommunicated and anathematised heretic, and as such regards him."

No one venturing, or feeling any inclination, to resist the passing of this sentence against the prisoner, it was formally pronounced, and he was immediately after delivered over to the secular magistrate. His execution, however, was put off for two days, to allow him time to prepare for death. During this interval, he was earnestly persuaded by the cardinal of Florence and others to recant ; but he returned the same answer to their entreaties as before, and was accordingly led to the stake. On his way to it, he repeated the apostles' creed with a loud, firm voice, and sang the litanies, and a hymn to the Virgin. When he arrived at the spot on which he was to suffer, he began to pray, and continued doing so

till the executioners interrupted him, in order to bind him to the stake. Seeing the wood heaped around him, he a second time repeated the creed; and when the officer who had the charge of lighting the pile went behind him to do it, he exclaimed, "Come hither, and kindle it before my eyes; for had I been afraid of it, I had not come hither, having had so many opportunities to escape." For some time after the wood had taken fire, he was heard singing a hymn; and the last words he uttered were, "Hanc animam in flammis afferro, Christe, tibi;"—"I deliver this soul to thee, O Christ, in the flames."*

The firmness with which both Huss and Jerome suffered excited the wonder of all, and the admiration of many. *Æneas Sylvius* says, "that they went to the stake as to a banquet; that not a word fell from them which discovered the slightest fear, and that they sang hymns, to the last gasp, without ceasing." But the most explicit testimony to the heroic conduct of Jerome is that borne by the celebrated Florentine, *Poggio Bracciolini*, who happened to be at Constance, in his official capacity as one of the apostolic secretaries, during the trial. In one of his letters to *Aretino*, he gives a full description of the manner in which the examinations were carried on, and speaks in the warmest terms of the eloquence of the martyr. "I confess," he says, "I never knew the art of speaking carried so near the model of ancient oratory. It was astonishing to hear in what forcible and fluent language, and with what closeness of reasoning he answered his adversaries; while the gracefulness of his manner, the dignity of his action, and the firmness and constancy of his whole behaviour, were equally admirable. It grieved me exceedingly to see so great a man labouring under an accusation so dreadful; whether justly or not, God knows; for my own part, I make no enquiry into the merits of the case, but submit my judgment to that of those who

* *Narratio Historica de Condemn. et Supplic. Hist. et Monument.* vol. ii. p. 515.

are better acquainted with the subject The assembly was very unruly and indecent ; but he answered the questions put to him with astonishing acuteness, and repelled every stroke directed against him. Nothing escaped him ; and his whole behaviour was indicative of magnanimity and piety. It was impossible to hear his pathetic harangue without emotion. Every ear was charmed, and every heart moved. Throughout the whole address he evinced the most wonderful powers of memory. He had been confined almost a year in a dungeon, and he complained of the severity of the treatment he had undergone, but with the feelings of a great and good man. In the miserable cell to which he had been doomed he was allowed neither books nor paper ; but, notwithstanding this, and though his mind was necessarily oppressed with constant anxiety, he was no more at a loss for proper authorities and quotations than as if he had passed the intermediate time at leisure, and in his own study. Firm and intrepid, he stood before the council, seeming not only to contemplate death with a collected mind, but to desire it. The greatest character in ancient story could not have evinced a nobler fortitude ; and, if there be any justice in history, his name will be handed down with honour to the latest posterity. I call him a wonderful man, and I think, without exaggeration ; for I was an eye-witness of his whole behaviour, and have not said half so much on the subject as I might have said."

If such were the feelings with which a stranger witnessed these proceedings, and one whose private opinions and situation were so little likely to prejudice him in favour of the martyr, we may easily conceive with what indignation they were contemplated by his friends and countrymen. Both Huss and Jerome were regarded by a numerous party in Bohemia as worthy of the highest veneration for their piety, and for the enlightened liberality of their sentiments. The death of the former, therefore, was no sooner made known at Prague, than the most violent excitement prevailed through all ranks

of society ; and, to add to the rage experienced at the base murder of a man so great and excellent in his profession, the popular voice was loud in execrating the shameful violation of public faith which had, in fact, been committed against the whole nation. A Bohemian had been put to death without being convicted of any crime, but that which every man, who used his reason and obeyed his conscience, was every day in danger of committing ; and he had been put to death in defiance of an assurance given to himself and his country, that no violence should be done him. The honour of the nation was thus deeply involved in the quarrel ; and both the king and the nobles of Bohemia earnestly desired to avenge the death of Huss, by inflicting a severe chastisement upon Sigismund and his confederates. The sentiments expressed in the remonstrance of the lords, who assembled to address the emperor on the subject, teem with the praises of Huss, and angry expostulation. " We protest," said these pious and high-minded men, " with the heart as well as with the lips, that John Huss was a man very honest, just, and orthodox ; that for many years he conversed among us with godly and blameless manners ; that, during all those years, he explained to us and to our people the gospel and the books of the Old and New Testaments, according to the exposition of holy doctors approved by the church ; and that he has left writings behind him, in which he constantly expresses his abhorrence of heresy. He taught us, indeed, to detest whatever is heretical ; constantly exhorted us to the practice of peace and charity, and gave us an example of these virtues in his own life. After all the enquiries we have instituted, we can find no blame attached to the life or doctrine of the said John Huss, but, on the contrary, behold in him whatever is pious, laudable, and becoming a true pastor. But, ye have not only disgraced us by his condemnation, but have also cruelly imprisoned, and, perhaps, already put to death, Jerome of Prague, a man of most profound learning and copious eloquence. Him also ye have con-

demned unconvicted ; but, notwithstanding all that has passed, we are resolved to sacrifice our lives in defence of the gospel of Christ, and of his faithful ministers."

Shortly after the execution of Jerome, the same nobles, who thus solemnly protested against the injustice of his martyrdom and that of Huss, appeared in the field, with the famous John de Trocznow, or Zisca, at their head, and followed by an army of 40,000 of their countrymen, all resolved upon breaking the fetters in which they had been so long held by a corrupt church. For thirteen years, Bohemia was the scene of constant confusion : its people were at length rewarded by a complete triumph over their enemies, and, had they preserved unity among themselves, they might have established a church in their country as distinguished as any in later years for the purity of its doctrines. But, unfortunately, the immediate followers of Huss were not determined in their principles, and vacillated between reforming the church itself, and contending for some partial change in the performance of its rites. Two parties were consequently formed ; one only desiring that the cup in the administration of the sacrament might be given to the laity as well as to the clergy ; and who, therefore, received the name of " Calixtines ;" the other, called " Taborites," from a mountain on which they met, struggling for the general diffusion of the doctrines and sentiments of Huss in all their bearings. The war against the common enemy was concluded by the Calixtines obtaining the object for which they contended. No sooner, however, were they thus satisfied, than they forsook their brethren, and joined with their adversaries in subjecting them to every species of annoyance on account of their unshaken adherence to the principles for which they originally contended. The Taborites, or Orphelines, as some of them were called, obtained little advantage, therefore, from the agreement entered into between the Romanists and the Calixtines ; and these true followers of Huss at last found it necessary to abandon their homes to preserve their religious inde-

pendence. Under the venerable name of the United Brethren, they repaired, in the year 1457, to Lititz, a district on the confines of Silesia and Moravia ; where they founded a church, destined to flourish for many ages, and well calculated for an example to prouder establishments.

The history of the Hussites, under their new appellation of United Brethren, or Moravians, cannot be here pursued ; but the preceding sketch of events which occurred anterior to the Reformation, is sufficient to show the state of popular feeling in many parts of Europe, previous to that great revolution in the Christian church : it will also serve to prove the flagrant wickedness of which the members of any religious body are guilty in allowing a persecuting spirit ever to commence its demoralising work upon their minds. It was, at first, with doubt and fear that even the banded hierarchy of Rome, assembled in full council, ventured to condemn a single individual to death ; but in the course of a few years, such was the progress which the principles of persecution made throughout the church, that almost every bishop in Christendom lifted up his voice and hand in their defence, and the guilt of heresy instead of requiring, as at first seemed necessary, patient and very lengthened examinations to be brought home to the accused, was punished with as much coolness and profligate haste as an offence against military discipline by a court martial. If, indeed, it be once allowed or believed, that any individual, or set of individuals, may lawfully inflict punishment on those who dispute the truth of their opinions, a two-edged sword is put into the hands of the fiercest enemies of humanity, — pride and ambition. Every man in power will think himself entitled to resent any contradiction of his sentiments by whatever instruments of punishment or oppression may lie within his reach. To doubt the infallibility of their reasoning is, with some people, a sufficient provocative to violence, because it offends their pride ; with others, it is a crime, because it tends to interrupt the course of

their ambition. Let the rulers of a church, therefore, be once suffered to believe that they may use any other arms in their defence, but those furnished by right reason, and those which she draws from the Scriptures, and they will speedily break down every barrier that can be opposed to inhumanity of the worst description : beginning as persecutors out of zeal for the honour of their church, they will next become persecutors to support the dignity of their order ; and, having familiarised themselves to this stage of their course, every member of the hierarchy will next, as it suits his convenience or agrees with his disposition, become a persecutor for himself.

The accusations against the pontiff were carried on without intermission while these barbarities were in progress against the poor and devout ministers of truth. It was not till after many acts had been passed respecting the punishment of his guilt that he could be induced to give his assent to the justice of the proceedings. Finding, however, that he could gain nothing by delay, he was at length induced to return to the neighbourhood of Constance, and there, in the presence of the deputies of the council, to make the required resignation. In the next session, he was pronounced deposed before the assembled representatives of Christendom ; and in the forty-first session, the cardinal Odo Colonna was elevated to the vacant chair by the title of Martin V. The news of his election was received at Rome with every manifestation of public joy ; and the eyes of Christians were again gladdened with some prospect of peace. To add to the satisfaction experienced on this account, deputies soon after arrived from Constantinople, with a message on the part of the Greek emperor John Palæologus, purporting that it was the desire of himself and his subjects to reunite the two divisions of the Christian church in new bonds of amity and fellowship.

It had been decreed in the council of Constance, that a similar assembly should be held at the end of five

years ; that a third should succeed at the end of seven years ; and that, for the future, a general council should be regularly summoned every ten years. The synods of Basle, of Ferrara, and Florence, followed each other in quick succession ; and in these assemblies the most important affairs of Christendom were investigated by the popes and the representatives of the churches throughout Europe and the East. Many of the canons and regulations which they established formed the groundwork of improvement, and merit grave consideration in the history of the Reformation. But the vices of the sovereign pontiffs continued to darken the religious horizon, notwithstanding the natural bulwark raised against them by these and similar meetings. Eugenius IV., the successor of Martin, having been deposed in the council of Basle, a rival pope was elected by the name of Felix V. The schism, however, which thus again threatened the church, was healed by the death of Eugenius, the election of Nicholas, and the resignation of Felix. Nicholas was a man of learning, and fostered with a careful hand the few means left for the restoration of peace. But the Greek empire had passed its allotted period of duration ; and Christians of every denomination saw with alarm and awe this long-divided but venerable and sacred member of the church fall, a last and splendid trophy, before the standard of the crescent. To this pontiff succeeded Callistus III., who was followed by the learned and tolerant Æneas Silvius. This excellent man occupied the throne, as Pius II., from 1458 to 1464. His successors, to the close of the century were Paul II., Sextus IV., Innocent VIII., and Alexander VI., the father of the infamous Cæsar Borgia, and the most abandoned of the worst occupants of the papal throne.

We have now brought our history down to that period when the preparations for a great and remarkable change became evident throughout Europe. The detail and examination of the events which tended to this approaching revolution may be most profitably

given, with the narrative of the revolution itself. The state and revival of learning ; the conflicts between the monastic orders and the clergy ; the condition of the people, struggling at the same time for civil liberty, for information on the subjects which intimately concern them in all their various degrees and ranks, and for the clear and definite sanctions to immortal hope, which a pure faith alone can give ; — these are the subjects which intimately belong to the period immediately preceding the Reformation ; and they are subjects sacred to careful investigation, and to full, as well as deliberate, statement. They involve principles dear to every friend of humanity, to whatever church or party he belongs ; and the writer may fairly be charged with folly and presumption, who could venture to approach near the limits of such a theme without having sufficient space to give to every circumstance of importance its due place and expansion.

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